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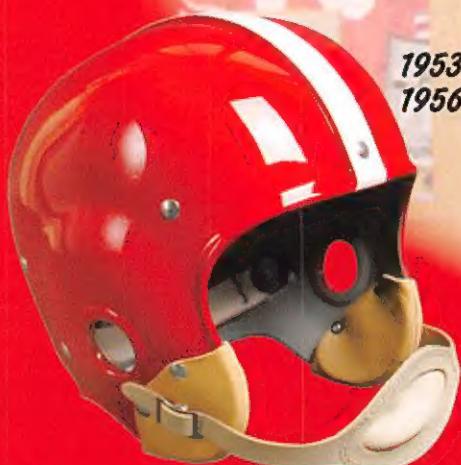
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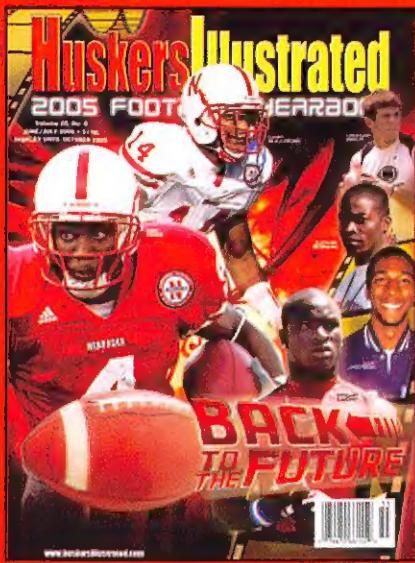
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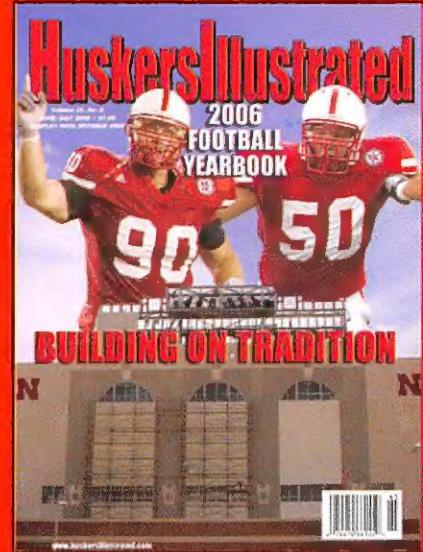
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FROM THE EDITOR

Competition Continues

Top quarterbacks get equal chance to show their stuff before Spring Game crowd



**Brian
HILL**

THE GAME ITSELF wasn't a fair fight, with the No. 1 offense and top defensive unit both on the same side. But the quarterback competition, with senior Sam Keller and junior Joe Ganz alternating by possession, was all about equality.

The only advantage Keller had was being out there first, and he took advantage of the opportunity, driving the Red team 73 yards in 11 plays, capped by a touchdown pass to Terrence Nunn.

On the next possession, Ganz followed suit, taking the No. 1 offense 80 yards in 10 plays. Despite the green, non-contact jersey that all the quarterbacks wore, Ganz finished off the drive himself with a 10-yard run.

And so it would go on a pleasant, partly sunny spring day, with temperatures in the mid-50s and a crowd that many schools would love to have for a regular-season game.

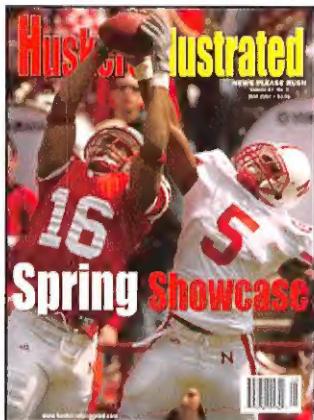
The stats were nearly as equal as the opportunities. Keller completed 10-of-13 for 193 yards and one touchdown. Ganz finished 11-of-18 for 157 yards and one score, in addition to his rushing touchdown. The starter apparently will not be named until preparations begin for the Sept. 1 opener against Nevada.

"I'm going to continue to evaluate our quarterback situation," coach Bill Callahan said after the April 14 Red-White Spring Game. "We're going to remain consistent about where we're at in terms of their status, and we won't name any starter until we get into the

ON THE COVER

Red team wide receiver Maurice Purify (16) goes up for the catch, despite the pressure from White team cornerback Armando Murillo (5). Cover photo by Scott Bruhn.

4 MAY 2007



end of training camp prior to the season."

Two other quarterbacks — junior Beau Davis and true freshman Patrick Witt — had the difficult task of leading the White team offense against the No. 1 defense. And Callahan stressed that Zac Lee, a junior college transfer who missed spring practice rehabilitating his knee after having surgery, also would be in the competition to replace Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year Zac Taylor.

You can read more about the quarterback competition, spring practice and the annual Spring Game in this edition of *Huskers Illustrated*. Our May edition includes a look at Nebraska first baseman Andrew Brown and high jumper Epley Bullock, as well as a look at the NU women's basketball team's appearance in the NCAA Tournament. Wrestling national champion Paul Donahoe is featured in "Spotlight," and softball outfielder Meghan Mullin answers "10 Questions."

Mullin and her teammates posted their first of two weekend victories over No. 11 Texas, and the NU soccer team and national champion volleyball team played exhibitions on Spring Game Saturday. Earlier, members of the volleyball team that won the school's third national championship in December received an ovation from the football throng gathered at Memorial Stadium.

The crowd of 54,288 wasn't a record, but it was still impressive. And the Red team's 38-0 victory was televised later that night (and several times the following week) on the NFL Network.

"We had a great crowd," Callahan said. "I can't thank them enough for their support of the program. This is all about the fans. We're really excited about having the support from our fans, and hopefully they enjoyed the day. We certainly enjoyed their support." ■

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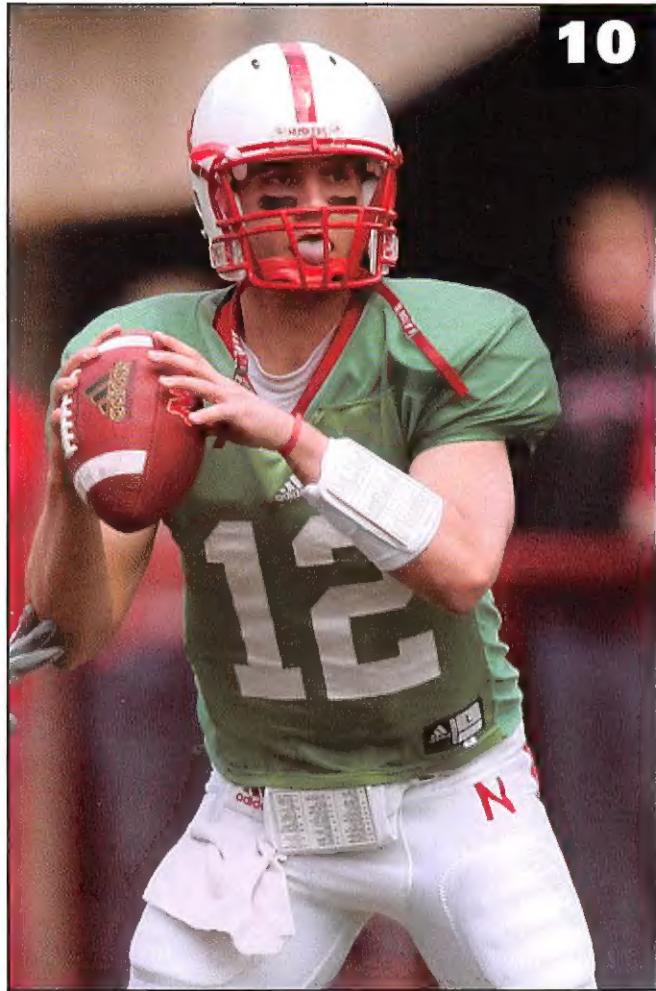
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Both sides of the ball played basic football, little or no shifting or movement on offense, little blitzing and basic fronts and coverages on defense. Execution was the order of the day for quarterbacks Joe Ganz (above) and Sam Keller in the Spring Game. By Mike Babcock

15 SPRING PRACTICE NOTES

The game had barely begun when Lydon Murtha was helped off the field. And it was almost over when Marlon Lucky had to be assisted to the sideline.

NEXT ISSUE

The Football Yearbook (June/July edition) will be mailed about June 18. Check for updates at huskersillustrated.com.

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Interested Observer

New Orleans Saints coach Sean Payton, the Associated Press 2006 NFL Coach of the Year, was the featured speaker at the Nebraska football team's spring coaching clinic. Payton made the trip to Lincoln as a favor to Bill Callahan, whom he describes as "a close friend, a close associate."

So when Callahan asked him, he agreed, even though the Saints were to begin a mini-camp the following Monday. Well, actually, Callahan didn't exactly ask him to speak.

"He told me I was speaking at the clinic," said Payton. "How's that?"

Some 800 coaches attended the two-day event. Among other speakers was former Cornhusker assistant Gene Huey, running backs coach for the Super Bowl champ Indianapolis Colts.

Payton spoke to reporters for the better part of a half hour after watching the Cornhuskers practice inside the Hawks Championship Center. They practiced outside only once during the spring, on the Monday before the Red-White intrasquad game, mostly because of the weather.

In any case, Payton was profuse in his praise of Callahan's three-year program. "You get inspired when you watch a practice like this and you see things that can help you even, just in regard to how you teach and how you maximize time," he said. "I've known Bill long enough to really not be surprised by what I saw today, and yet there's always something that just catches your eye."

"I think he's a great teacher and he's obviously got a great group of coaches."

Callahan played an important role in his becoming an NFL coach, Payton said. Callahan and Jon Gruden, who spoke at last year's clinic, were assistants with the Philadelphia Eagles and recommended him to head coach Ray Rhoades, who was looking to hire a quarterbacks coach.

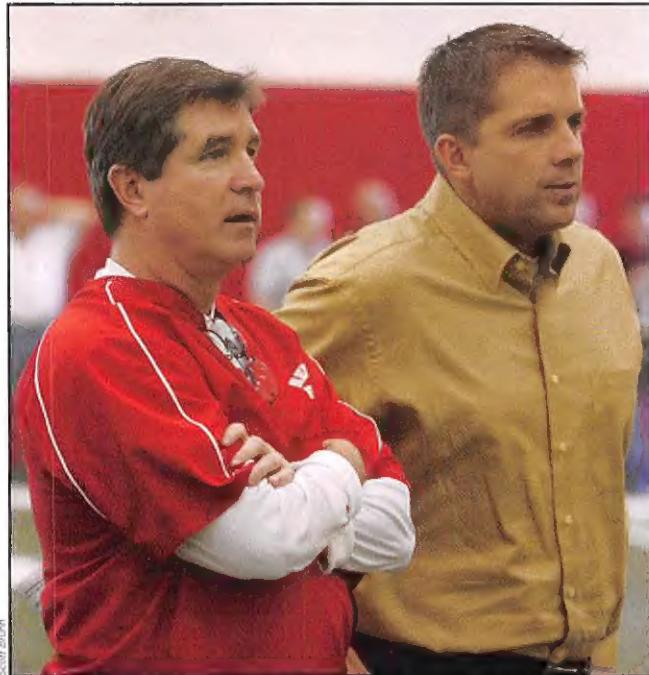
Gruden was the offensive coordinator, Callahan the offensive line coach.

He and Callahan first met at the scouting combine in Indianapolis.

The two even rode to work together on occasion while with the Eagles. They left early in the morning, or rather, "you really would be correct to call it the nights," said Payton.

Some things don't change. That's how it is with coaches.

Because of the recommendation first to Gruden and then the two of them to Rhoades, Callahan "felt, I'm sure, some-



Sean Payton (right), coach of the New Orleans Saints, watches a spring practice with Nebraska coach Bill Callahan.

what responsible in my progress as a young coach," Payton said.

"He was going to make sure I wasn't going to fail. And, you know, at a young age and coming from the college game, there was a lot to learn in a short period of time. But he's a real special teacher and that's always served him well in his career. And I think it will serve Nebraska well."

Other Payton observations:

On what Cornhuskers impressed him during practice: "Well, I'd give you numbers, maybe, and it would be hard for me to even give you numbers, but one receiver, 16 — is that his number? — he looked pretty impressive. It would be good to go home with him today, but I can't."

(He was referring to

Maurice Purify, of course.)

On Callahan's offense and the NFL: "I think there's probably half our league (that) runs a similar system in regards to terminology. There's no better training ground. It's very similar to what we're running in New Orleans, and I could go through the list of teams that use the same system."

"There are obviously some spin-offs, but Bill's experience in Oakland, where they were offensively and the progress they've made here it's a great fit for a quarterback. It's second to none."

(Prospective recruits take note.)

On the system's appeal to young players: "The one thing you see now is the kids getting recruiting want to throw the football. The receivers want to be involved in the passing game. They want to play in the NFL someday, possibly, along with getting their education. The quarterbacks want to go where they can get prepared to have their best chance, maybe, to grow and get the experience they need."

"It's what's winning in our league. You still need defense and you still need a running game and all those things we preach. But you've got to be able to throw the football successfully, and I think it's winning in the college game as well."

(See previous parenthetical comment.)

On whether Callahan might get the itch to return to the NFL: "I think the itch he has is the itch we all have and that's to win. I think to be able to teach players in an environment like this, I think he's extremely motivated. This is a special place. This has been a great day for me to just see it. This is a place where you feel that expectation and you feel that excitement toward football. So I don't know that there's a lot of itching here. I think he's pretty excited about his opportunity here, the job he has here." ■

QUICK HITS

PERFECT SPRING

No surprise here. Nebraska's NCAA champion volleyball team won all three of its spring exhibition matches and didn't lose a game in the process.

The Huskers defeated San Diego, at San Diego, Wichita State and Colorado State (Photos on Page 34). The Wichita State match was held at North Platte, Neb., High School, drawing an overflow crowd of 2,400. The gym was full nearly an hour before the start of the match, which included the first action for senior Christina Houghtelling in 10 months, following shoulder surgery.

Houghtelling, the 2005 AVCA National Player of the Year, will join Sarah Pavan, the 2006 National Player of the Year and Honda Award winner, and AVCA All-Americans Jordan Larson, Tracy Stalls and Rachel Holloway, as the Huskers set out to defend their NCAA title.

Nebraska's schedule will include three matches at Qwest Center Omaha as well as one against Hawaii at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The larger venues will allow for more fans to see the team. "We know how much support we get from around the state," coach John Cook said.

The Huskers will open the season by playing host to three tournaments on consecutive weekends. Their conference opener is against Texas, the Big 12 runner-up in 2006.

AVCA Showcase, Qwest Center Omaha
Aug. 24 — Tennessee
Aug. 25 — UCLA or Utah
Labor Day Tournament
Aug. 31 — Creighton, NU Coliseum
Sept. 2 — Penn State, Qwest Center Omaha
Sept. 3 — Cal Poly, NU Coliseum
Ameritas Players Challenge
Sept. 7-8 — TBA, NU Coliseum

Sept. 12 — Texas
Sept. 15 — at Texas Tech
Sept. 22 — Texas A&M
Sept. 26 — at Kansas
Sept. 29 — Baylor
Oct. 3 — Kansas State
Oct. 6 — at Colorado
Oct. 10 — Iowa State
Oct. 13 — at Oklahoma
Oct. 17 — at Missouri
Oct. 20 — Kansas
Oct. 21 — Hawaii (BDSC)
Oct. 24 — at Texas
Oct. 31 — Missouri
Nov. 3 — at Kansas State
Nov. 7 — Colorado
Nov. 11 — at Iowa State
Nov. 14 — at Texas A&M
Nov. 17 — Oklahoma
Nov. 21 — at Baylor
Nov. 24 — Texas Tech
Nov. 29-Dec. 2 — NCAA First & Second Rounds
Dec. 7-8 — NCAA Regionals
Dec. 13-15 — NCAA Finals at Sacramento, Calif.

MORE VOLLEYBALL

Larson and Stalls were among five collegiate players selected in open tryouts to participate in the U.S. Women's National Volleyball team program at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado

Springs, Colo., beginning in May. They will join a group that includes former Husker Dani Busboom.

Larson, a first-team AVCA All-American in 2006, has played with the U.S. Youth and Junior National teams, while Stalls a second-team AVCA All-American in 2006, was a member of the U.S. Women's National Team in 2003 and 2004. Stalls also competed on the U.S. Girls' Youth National Team in 2000 and the U.S. Women's Junior National Team in 2001 and 2002.

Those who make the U.S. Women's team roster will compete at **Jordan Larson** the Pan American Cup in Colima, Mexico, June 19-30 and the Pan American Games at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 14-19.

The other collegians selected to train are Stanford's Foluke Akinradewo and Cynthia Barboza and Florida's Marcie Hampton. Another collegiate player or two could be added.

Larson also was to join Pavan in representing Nebraska at the POWERADE Collegiate Beach Volleyball Championship in San Diego. The event was scheduled for April 22.

Two-player teams from eight top collegiate volleyball programs were to compete, with Nebraska the No. 1 seed, following by Stanford, Penn State, Minnesota, Texas, Florida, San Diego and Utah.

CSTV will televise the competition May 18, 19 and 20.

SPRING SOCCER

Coach John Walker's soccer team also scheduled a match at North Platte, Neb. The Huskers were set to finish their spring schedule against Colorado there. They were 2-1-2 in five matches, all in Lincoln. A sixth match against Southeast Missouri State in Overland Park, Kan., was canceled.

Walker announced the Huskers' recruiting class in mid-March. The class, one of the largest in the program's history, included 14 players, seven of them from the state.

Alexa Cardona, F/MF, Lincoln, Neb. (Pius X)
Brianna Eilman, MF/F/D, Omaha (Westside/Toro Magic)
Michaella Fulmer, F, Lee's Summit, Mo. (O'Hara/SASC Pink Panthers)
Colleen Goetzmann, MF, Omaha (Millard North/Toro Magic)
Katie Goetzmann, MF, Omaha (Millard North/Toro Magic)
Brittany Goosen, F/MF/D, Olathe, Kan. (South/KCFC Futura)
Rachel Hawryluk, D, Dallas (Trinity Christian/Dallas Texans 89 Red)
Jessica Mills, GK, Houston (Clear Lake/Challenge 89)
Jamie Sanchez, F, Lincoln, Neb. (Lutheran/Victory)
Meredith Shuman, D, Omaha (Bellevue West/Toro Magic)
Blair Slapper, F/MF/D, Prairie Village, Kan.

(Shawnee Mission East/KCFC Heat)
Anna White, MF/F, Warrensburg, Mo. (Warrensburg/KC Futura)
Jaclyn White, F, Torrance, Calif. (Bishop Montgomery/P.V.S.C Breakers)
Andrea Zuniga, F/D, Omaha (Burke, Toro Magic)

The Huskers are scheduled to open 2007 with an exhibition match at Louisville, Ky. The regular season is slated to begin against Northwestern at the Nebraska Soccer Field on Sept. 2, with the Big 12 Conference opener also there against Oklahoma on Sept. 28.

ON TO NATIONALS

The Husker women's gymnastics team, which won the Big 12 championship at Columbia, Mo., at the end of March, will be competing in the NCAA Championships at Salt Lake City, April 26-28. The University of Utah. Coach Dan Kendig's team qualified for a ninth consecutive NCAA berth by finishing second to Utah at the NCAA West Regional in Berkeley, Calif., in mid-April.

Junior Emily Parsons won titles on vault and in floor exercise, while sophomore Kylie Stone was the Huskers' highest finisher in the all-around competition at fourth. Nebraska's team score of 196.675 was fifth-highest among the 12 NCAA-qualifying teams. In addition to Utah, they include: Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Stanford, Oregon State, Michigan, UCLA, LSU, Oklahoma and Denver.

Parsons, a seven-time All-American from St. Charles, Mo., and the South Central Regional Gymnast of the Year for a second consecutive season, also led Nebraska to its 20th conference championship all-time, winning titles on vault, beam, floor exercise and all-around, with a career-high score of 39.65. Michele Zabawa won the bars, giving the Huskers a sweep.

LISTS

● **Wrestling Team Awards:** Lincoln Optimist — Austin Baier; Husker Power — Craig Brester; Spirit of Excellence — Jordan Burroughs, Stephen Dwyer; Most Improved — Brester; Granite — Chris Oliver, Tom Rice, Cameron Browne; Redshirt of the Year — Matt Vacanti; Most Dedicated — Dominick Moyer; Outstanding Wrestler — Paul Donahoe.

● **Arthur Ashe Scholars:** First team — Sarah Pavan (volleyball), Imke Reimers (women's tennis), Justin Roach (track & field), Issar Yashbin (track & field), Daniel Christensen (track & field). Second team — Sari Raber (soccer), Gyorgi Farkas (track & field), Selenia Iacchelli (soccer), Renato Melo (men's tennis), Tyrell Ross (track & field).

● **2007 Brook Berringer Citizenship Team, football:** Greg Austin, Titus Brothers, *Victory Haines, *Will Henry, *Todd Peterson, *J.B. Phillips, Brandon Rigoni, *Matt Senske, *Dan Titchener, *Jake Wesch.
*current team ■



Emily Parsons

No Place Like Home

Maric takes a break to catch his breath before preparing for senior season



**Mike
BABCOCK**

FROM 56A, AN EXIT SEAT on the left side of the cabin, Aleks Maric can see all of Sydney, Australia, as the Quantas jetliner banks in its final approach, over the beaches, over the steel Harbour Bridge, over the futuristic Opera House on Bennelong Point in Sydney Harbour, over everything.

"It's the most beautiful thing ever," Maric said. So ends his 24-hour journey, beginning in Omaha and including a final 14-hour (depending on the weather) flight from Los Angeles.

When he emerges from the terminal, after securing his luggage, he takes a deep breath. "I feel like I lose like 300 pounds," he said. "It's one of those breaths you take and it goes inside your lungs and it knocks on your heart's door and says you're home."

Even if he were blindfolded, that first breath would be a giveaway. Sydney is like no other place. Nothing in this country compares. "No offense but not even close," he said.

He could find his way home from the airport on instinct, too, walk there no problem.

Maric described the experience recently before going home for Easter. Considering Nebraska's spring semester is just coming to a close, his early departure could be cause for concern among Cornhusker basketball fans. But coach Doc Sadler won't have to fly to Sydney to persuade him to return.

Maric planned the six-week visit well in advance. He went through proper channels, asking professors if he could accelerate the semester, finish his assignments and exams early. He could, and did.

He was able to complete everything. "I was very fortunate about that," he said.

The first three weeks he planned to do very little, just be a "normal 22-year-old." Then he planned to resume preparing for his senior season. He packed three basketballs in his baggage.

Friends asked if he had room to pack them. They wanted to go along.

"I wish you could," he told them. And you know he did.

He would love to show them his city, his home, as he did Sadler, who visited soon after becoming Nebraska's coach in early August. Maric remembers getting a phone call from Sadler one day and answering a knock at the front door to find him standing there the next morning.

He had seen pictures of Sadler on the Huskers.com Web site and expected someone who stood 6-foot-6 or so. Sadler is not nearly that tall. Maric looked down, as he would with most everyone.

He remembers saying something like, "Uh, hi, what's up?"

Sadler's height might have surprised him, but Sadler's intensity did not. "I knew just by looking in his eyes that he was a hard-working, intense coach," said Maric. "I knew then I'd better get back."



Aleks Maric averaged 18.5 points and 8.7 rebounds as a junior.

It wasn't that Sadler intimidated him into returning to Nebraska for his junior season. Rather, he shared Sadler's intensity, the wanting to win and to be willing to settle for nothing less.

Would he have returned if Sadler hadn't visited?

"I don't know," Maric said. "Obviously, things happened the way they did, so I can't comment on that now because I don't know what would happen. But he came. We met. We saw each other. And I couldn't be happier. I'm very happy that he came and visited with my parents."

Sadler got the quick tour with his 6-11 tour guide, his "down-South" accent even more distinctive in Australia. "You've seen the show, 'Hillbillies,' where they live in Beverly Hills? It was kind of like that, like what's the son's name, Jethro or Jed, whatever," said Maric. "It was pretty funny."

He enjoys Sadler's personality off the court and respects it on.

"In the sporting world, you've got to have a balance, otherwise, you'd just go crazy," he said. "I mean, if you're just basketball, basketball, basketball, you'd have to see Dr. Phil."

Even so, he's close to basketball, basketball, basketball, as is Sadler. Basketball is the reason he left his family at age 16 for the Australian Institute for Sport and then a couple of years after that came to the United States to continue his development at Burlington Life Center in Burlington, N.J.

"I was basically a teenager all over the world, so I was forced to mature a lot quicker and become a man at a teenage age," he said. "It was definitely tough; I'm not going to lie."

"But, obviously, you grind through it and then things become easy because you understand what you're doing. You're making sacrifices, so one day it's going to pay off for you. One day you're going to get an education and you're going to have a great four years of basketball."

What happens after that, "nobody knows," he said.

Understanding doesn't make being so far from home easier, though. That's why he wanted to go home for Easter and spend some time catching up on what he's missed. It would take three years not six weeks to do it right. But six weeks will have to do for now.

Quantas accommodates his height, and he always requests seat 56A. If he can, he sleeps.

One time he was able to sleep for most of the flight from Los Angeles. He awoke to the captain's telling the flight attendants to prepare for landing. "I was like, 'You bet,'" he said.

He looked out the window and then, as always, prepared for that first sweet breath. ■

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for nearly 30 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

Valuable Reminder

Nebraska coach's mid-game switch gets players' attention



**Curt
McKEEVER**

HALFWAY THROUGH THE GAME that represented the midpoint of Big 12 Conference play, Nebraska baseball coach Mike Anderson pulled out the tough-love card.

The subject of Anderson's lesson was third baseman Craig Corriston, who in the fourth inning of the second game of an April 14 double-header at Oklahoma made an error that allowed the Sooners to pull into a tie, then failed to block a short-hopped throw from catcher Mitch Abeita on a stolen-base attempt that let them go ahead.

Though he'd provided the Huskers with a triple and single in the contest, Corriston found himself watching the final five innings from the dugout.

"We still needed him, offensively," Anderson said. But "there's a way to play this game and in that situation . . . there's no way a run should score."

Corriston, of course, already knew that. But sometimes a harsh reinforcement is necessary to drive home a point. At least that was the hope of NU's coach, who watched his up-and-down team rally for a crucial 6-4 win, and the next day take a 12-5 decision that gave it a second straight series edge against a nationally ranked opponent that elevated the Huskers into the upper division for the first time all season.

In the latter victory, Corriston played mistake-free, supplied an early two-run single to tie the game and later added a two-run homer.

"I needed that," he said of Anderson's lesson from the previous game.

When asked if that's really how he felt, Corriston gave a different answer. But he acknowledged that Anderson's mid-game switch had given the Huskers a valuable reminder about what's expected.

"He wants guys, every pitch, going all out, (and) you're like, 'He's not messing around,'" junior second baseman Jake Opitz said. "We know we have to play that hard anyway, but by doing that, pulling somebody out, it gets your attention."

Obviously, Anderson would prefer not to have to take such measures. But Corriston's sloppy play gave him a prime opportunity to try and shake up a team he expected to contend in the Big 12 and beyond.

Nebraska had entered the series at Oklahoma having lost at 11th-ranked Wichita State 5-3, a game in which the Shockers scored four eighth-inning runs. That result marked the ninth time in what was then a 13-loss season that the Huskers had dropped a game they had held a lead in.

Four days later, NU was leaving Norman, Okla., anticipating a 15-game home stand and its final four league series, looking capable of making a late-season push in the mold of the 2002 Huskers.

That year, Nebraska — with proven All-America performers like Shane Komine, Jeff Leise, eventual Big 12 Player of the Year Jed Morris and all-league pitcher Aaron Marsden — was struggling with its identity before playing Oklahoma in the fifth

league series.

The Huskers proceeded to win four of their final five sets (all by a 2-1 count) to finish 16-11 in the conference. They took an eight-game winning streak into the Big 12 Tournament and made it to the championship, swept through a home NCAA regional and, finally, beat Richmond in a super regional they unexpectedly got to play at Haymarket Park to wind up back in the College World Series.

What happened with that team? Justin Seely — a senior who got hot the back half of 2002, and now NU's volunteer assistant — remembers how a week after a loss at Creighton and following the only negative Big 12 series of the final five, Nebraska pulled off some ninth-inning dramatics to beat the Bluejays 6-5.

"It's a big emotional moment, and from there on out it seemed that we just relaxed," Seely said. "At times, with Coach (Dave) Van Horn, it could get very intense, but it just seemed like a whole weight fell off, and we just played."

Morris, who hit 23 homers and batted .382, also played his best down the stretch. Leise, who hit .371 with 12 homers and 25 steals from the leadoff spot, kept setting up the offense. Komine, though battling through an injury, went 10-0. And Marsden became a key No. 2 starter who finished 8-1.

Now, Seely believes first baseman Andrew Brown (who had a 15-game hitting streak after the Oklahoma series), shortstop Ryan Wehrle (who's laboring to produce the kind of numbers he did while being named a third-team All-American in 2006) or speedy center fielder Bryce Nimmo (who's been on a tear in the Big 12 after missing time with a concussion and shoulder injury) have the ability to have similar influences.

If he's right, NU will need a reliable third starter to emerge down the stretch to team with preseason All-American Tony Watson and Johnny Dorn (6-1 after winning against Oklahoma). The Huskers' bullpen also will need to do a better job of controlling games while pitching with a lead.

However, experience tells Anderson that no matter how things appear, the dynamic of how players and teams perform always seems to be in a constant state of flux.

Back in 2002, "I can't tell you everything, but we didn't stop tweaking the lineup until it fit," he said. "I've seen it enough to where all of a sudden you say 'Why weren't we doing that before?'

"Sometimes it's not as obvious as it looks, so we'll keep tweaking."

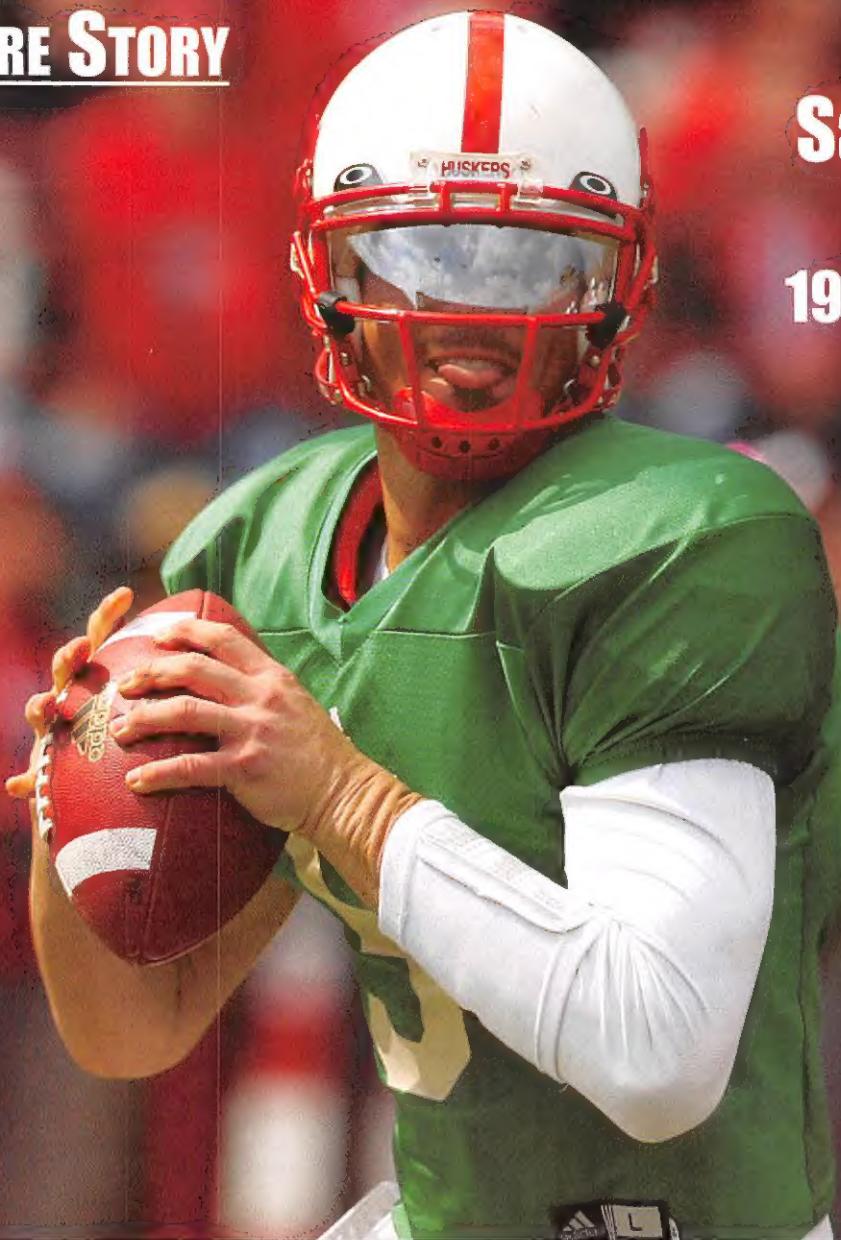
And, if necessary, dish out more tough love.

"We're coming around. I think everybody's gaining a lot of confidence," Corriston said after the Huskers dusted off Oklahoma by producing their 10th double-digit hit total in 11 games. "Earlier in the year, confidence wasn't real high. It's spreading." ■

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FEATURE STORY

Sam Keller
10-13-0
193 yards, 1 TD



Showtime

By Mike Babcock
Photos By Scott Bruhn



Joe Ganz

11-18-0
157 yards, 1 TD
1 rushing TD

Quarterbacks Keller, Ganz lead players in drama that will continue into the fall

S

am Keller remembers it this way.

As he was directing the Red team on an eight-play, 90-yard touchdown drive in the second quarter of Spring Game, I-back Cody Glenn told him after the score he was going to be the "camera man."

Keller asked what Glenn meant by "camera man."

"Take pictures, take . . . snap pictures," Glenn replied. "I thought it was a cool deal," Keller told reporters afterward.

So after Glenn ran the final 5 yards to the south end zone, Keller tried to arrange the mock photograph, which was to include Glenn, of course, and some offensive linemen.

But the linemen were too slow in getting over to the corner of the end zone, Keller said, so he settled for fullback Thomas Lawson and tight end J.B. Phillips flanking Glenn.

He framed the imaginary photo, waving a player or two out of the way of the imaginary lens, and pressed a button on an imaginary camera as if to preserve the moment.

Joe Ganz remembers it this way.

The fictitious photo-session touchdown celebration was actually his idea, the product of his imagination. Keller stole it. "So I was a little upset with him," Ganz said.

Keller apologized, and transferred the blame. "I had no idea I stole it," he said. "I could have thought of something

else, but I liked that one (celebration). It was Cody's idea."

Besides, Keller might have added, Ganz had staged his own celebration after directing the Red team to one of its four first-quarter touchdowns . . . Hey, Macarena.

"We had a bad little Macarena dance that we did," said Ganz.

Suffice it to say, Los Del Rio would have been appalled by the attempt.

"I thought I did pretty well," Ganz said. "The other guys kind of forgot it. The dance is a couple of years old, so . . . we just wanted to do something cheesy, just make ourselves look ridiculous."

Some in a Memorial Stadium crowd of 54,288 must have said mission accomplished.

"It looked bad. We weren't in sync. But it was pretty funny," said Ganz.

The fake photo and the Macarena were firsts for the Spring Game, of course, and during a real game instead of an intrasquad scrimmage, they would have drawn penalty flags for excessive celebration. But coach Bill Callahan instructed the officials to let the celebrations slide.

"We wanted our guys to have some fun," he said. "I think that's what this day was all about, to go out, relax, have some fun and play the game in a very simple fashion."

Both sides of the ball played basic football, little or no shifting or movement on offense, little blitzing and basic



Junior I-back Marlon Lucky (20) rushed for 94 yards and a touchdown before leaving the field with an injury in the fourth quarter. Coach Bill Callahan said that Lucky suffered a minor knee sprain.

fronts and coverages on defense. Execution was the order of the day.

The celebrations notwithstanding, however, the experience was hardly relaxing for the players, for whom the game-conditions scrimmage was the 15th and final practice of the spring.

It was one last time to be evaluated. And it was the first time that fans, as well as reporters (practices were closed for the first time under Callahan), to watch Keller and Ganz in action.

Keller, the transfer from Arizona State, and Ganz, Zac Taylor's top back-up last season, were among four quarterbacks who competed in the spring to succeed Taylor as the starter. Junior Beau Davis and freshman Patrick Witt, an early enrollee

like Curt Dukes in 2002, were the others.

Zac Lee, a transfer from San Francisco City College, would have been a fifth but spent the spring rehabbing a knee injury. Even so, he "is still in the equation," Callahan reiterated after the 38-0 Red victory. "I don't want to discount his opportunity to compete for the position as well."

Nevertheless, Keller and Ganz clearly are the lead players in a drama that will continue in training camp. Callahan said he won't name a starter until the week of the opener against Nevada.

Even though the crowd was the smallest to watch a Callahan-coached Spring Game, it would make those of

other programs pale in comparison. One of the appeals was seeing the much-publicized Keller, who promised he would do everything he could to put on an offensive show.

And he made good on the promise, as did Ganz.

They directed the Red team to touchdowns on the first five possessions, Keller then Ganz then Keller then Ganz then Keller. The sixth possession produced an Alex Henery field goal. The Red team punted only once in the first half, on its seventh and final possession.

The two quarterbacks' numbers were comparable. Keller completed 10-of-13 passes for 193 yards and one touchdown. Ganz completed 11-of-18 for 157 yards and one touchdown.



Cornerback Cortney Grixby (2) and his Red teammates stop White team receiver Dan Erickson for a short gain in the fourth quarter. The Red team, with the No. 1 defense, limited the White to a net of 9 yards.

Neither threw an interception. Ganz, who also had a 10-yard touchdown run, was sacked once.

Callahan said he "felt very good" about how both performed.

Keller started behind in the spring race, of course. He spent the fall directing the scout team. He was named the outstanding offensive scout team player, in fact. His only previous experience with Nebraska's offense came early in bowl practices, before the semester's classes ended.

But Callahan and quarterbacks coach Shawn Watson didn't ease him in. It was sink or swim. "I had to perform while learning, which was a different thing for me," said Keller.

From the first day of spring to the Red-White game, he covered "miles," he said, "totally night and day. Anything that we dial up, I know exactly what we're doing, and that's a good feeling. Right now you could

dial up anything and I feel very confident in anything we try to do."

Ganz might have had an edge in a lengthy scrimmage the previous Saturday, directing three touchdown drives, two of them against the first team defense, to Keller's none. But some of Keller's passes had been dropped, Watson said afterward. So there was no indication of separation.

There was no indication of separation in the Spring Game, either, from Ganz's point of view anyway. "Not that I could tell," he said. "You guys (reporters) maybe had something different, but not that I could tell. Today it looked pretty even to me. That's just my sense of reality."

"I thought it was pretty equal today, pretty equal all spring."

Ganz and Keller seemed to handle the attention with the maturity required of the position. After the final practice, an early-morning affair,

before Spring Game, Watson said both had been "pretty solid. You know when you're a quarterback, you can't do this stuff (get overly excited). You've got to stay real poised, and I think they're both looking for the opportunity to go out and compete and play."

The coaches would place no greater emphasis on their play in the Spring Game, he said, "because we do so much situational stuff during the course of a practice. They're getting evaluated on everything they do. Every rep they take here on the field is graded, charted, timed and evaluated. You don't do it all in one situation. You do it over the long period of time. Those are good, sound decisions."

Although the quarterback competition attracted far and away the most attention during the spring, success in the fall will depend on other areas,



Defensive tackle Brandon Johnson celebrates a fumble recovery in the third quarter, one of the few highlights for the White team.

among them a completely replaced defensive line and the continuing development of an offensive line without key players in the Spring Game.

Uncertainty at I-back, which caused the move of Major Culbert from safety, became more uncertain when Marlon Lucky left the Spring Game early in the fourth quarter with what Callahan said afterward appeared to be a sprained MCL. The secondary suffered a blow when cornerback Zack Bowman suffered a patellar tendon tear early in the spring. And there are other areas of interest, if not concern.

But everyone loves quarterback competition, the underlying theme of Callahan's fourth spring, as it was two years ago when Taylor came from Wake Forest by way of Butler County (Kan.) Community College to

unseat incumbent Joe Dailey and send him packing for North Carolina.

Dailey was making a move to wide receiver this spring, by the way.

Last spring, with Taylor established, the interest was in freshman back-up Harrison Beck, who is now at North Carolina State. Beck didn't play in last year's Spring Game because of injury.

Ganz played with both the Red and White teams a year ago. But this time he moved to center stage with Keller. "It's a pretty heated competition," he said, though nothing personal.

"I wanted to show the fans what I could do I, put a good performance on for them so they'll have a little more respect for what I do. I didn't feel it was going to make or break if I had a shot for the starter, but obviously it helped my case a little bit today,

having a strong performance."

Fortunately, the Macarena wasn't part of the evaluation, though Ganz said he would give himself a 10 on a scale of 1 to 10. OK, he relented. Maybe his Macarena deserved a 5.

No matter. "We told the guys to have fun today," Callahan said. And the celebrations were a part of it. "We'll do that in practice when we get in the red zone. We'll have some fun. A lot of guys will spike the ball around a little bit and, you know, just enjoy themselves."

Come fall, he's looking for touchdowns without celebrations, at least celebrations that could be construed as excessive. After passing 14 yards to Terrence Nunn to finish an 11-play, 73-yard drive on the Spring Game's first possession, Keller raised his fists in a touchdown signal.

That was celebration enough. ■

SPRING FOOTBALL NOTES

HEALTH MATTERS

The game had barely begun when Lydon Murtha was helped off the field. And it was almost over when Marlon Lucky had to be assisted to the sideline. Though 12:36 remained in the fourth quarter, the clock didn't stop in the second half, except to tend to Lucky, prone near the Red 40-yard line.

Coach Bill Callahan and Tim Cassidy, the associate athletic director for football, came across the field to check on Lucky, who left the field afterward on a cart and was seen on crutches later.

The injury was thought to be a sprained medial collateral ligament.

"It's always serious when anybody gets injured, but I don't think it's anything that's going to be career-ending or anything of that nature," Callahan told reporters afterward.

Lucky was at the Husker softball game the next day, with a limp but without crutches.

Murtha's injury was an ankle sprain, Callahan said, adding that an x-ray had shown "there are no fractures. So that's positive." Freshman D.J. Jones stepped in for Murtha with the top unit.

During the Big 12 coaches' post-spring teleconference, Callahan alleviated concerns about Lucky and Murtha, indicating that both should be ready to go by training camp.

The most significant injuries of the spring occurred early on, including one off the field in which I-back Kenny Wilson, who was already sidelined by a staph infection in a knee, suffered a broken leg while moving a television set. The other injury, which Callahan called "freakish," occurred in the fifth practice when cornerback Zack Bowman was involved in a collision in a seven-on-seven drill.

Bowman suffered a torn patellar tendon in his right knee.

"I hate it, man. I'm glad spring's over," Bowman said after the Red-White game. He was frustrated having to watch others play while he was beginning rehab after a week in the hospital.

Bowman missed last season because of a torn ACL in his left knee, suffered early in training camp. When the patellar tendon injury occurred, "I said, 'Why me?' But it has to be me for a reason, and I've just got to live with it, kind of find out what it is and make the best of it," said Bowman.

He expects to be able to play his senior season. "I've kind of got in my head around four, four-and-a-half months, (to) come back and be 100 percent, ready to go," he said.

Wilson, however, likely will miss what would be his senior season.

Bowman and Wilson were among 14 who missed the game, and most or all of the spring, because of injuries. The list included: offensive linemen Andy Christensen, Mike Huff and Jacob Hickman, tight end Mike McNeill, fullback Matt Senske, quarterback Zac Lee, defensive linemen Barry Turner, Kevin Luhrs, Craig Roark and Seth Jensen and defensive backs Corey Young and Ryan Ford.

MAJOR ISSUE

Wilson's injury left running backs coach Randy Jordan with only two members of his 2006 I-back committee, Lucky and Cody Glenn, who went through spring dealing with the omni-present pain of a mid-foot sprain suffered against Texas A&M. The injury sidelined him for the final three games.

Glenn said three days before the Spring Game that the foot was at "80 to 85 percent," hampering his ability to cut and bothering him even when he ran straight ahead near the end of a practice.

"You just want it to go away, but it's constantly there, bothering you," he said. After the Spring Game, "I get seven weeks (of rest) to just kind of let it heal before summer conditioning."

"It should be full-go (then). I should be full-go, no problems at all."

With him ailing, Wilson out and Brandon Jackson anticipating the NFL draft, Nebraska was thin at I-back, prompting the move of sophomore Major Culbert from safety. "I'm a little bit greedy when it comes to running backs," said Jordan. "I want to have all of them. Give me 20, I take 20."

He had to settle for four. The other was freshman Marcus Mendoza, who had the team's fastest 40-yard dash time in testing (4.4 seconds), despite gaining a needed 10 pounds, to 185.

NEVER STAY THE SAME

As expected, the Red team defense dominated, allowing 9 total yards. The White team finished with a rushing net of minus-33 because of allowing six sacks for minus-45 yards.

Ndamukong Suh was credited with two of the sacks and another tackle for a 5-yard loss, tossing Culbert aside, and then resisting the urge to talk some good-natured trash to his teammate.

During the previous Saturday's scrimmage "we got into it a little bit," said Suh. "But it was nothing but friendly. So I wanted to, but I didn't get the chance. I had to run back to the huddle."

Suh, who will be a junior, is expected to anchor a rebuilt defensive line at nose tackle, following the loss of Adam Carriger, Jay Moore, Ola Dagunduro and Barry Cryer.

"I definitely think we came quite a long way. Everybody was expecting us to fill quite big shoes," the 6-foot-4, 305-pound Suh said. "We were pushed throughout practice and challenged, which I feel that we came together as a unit and met those challenges. But even though we met those challenges, we still have quite a bit of work to do in the off-season and just meshing together as a unit."

With Turner sidelined by a shoulder injury, Clayton Sievers stepped in at open-side end, joining Suh, base end Zach Potter and tackle Ty Steinkuhler with the first line. Apparently, the defense also worked from a 3-4 alignment and utilized weakside linebacker Steve Octavien as an edge rusher. "We're trying to put Steve in a position where he can make plays," said defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove.

How much change the defense underwent, or experimented with, was uncertain since practices were closed to the media, and the Spring Game defensive alignments were basic. "You just want to see kids play their normal, fundamental techniques in our base defense and see how they respond," he said.

Earlier in the spring, however, Cosgrove acknowledged that "you never want to stay the same (defensively). You always try to improve yourself, improve your schemes."

BRIEFLY

- The place-kicking competition will resume in training camp when scholarship recruit Adi Kunalic joins walk-ons Alex Henery and Jake Wesch. Henery kicked extra points and a 36-yard field goal in the Spring Game. He also handled kickoffs for the Whites while Wesch handled them for the Reds. Daniel Lee, a transfer from Vanderbilt who will have to sit out, also kicked off once for the Reds.

Dan Titchener, the returning starter, Michael Such and Wesch did the punting. Henery came to Nebraska expecting to punt, which he worked on in the fall in addition to place-kicking.

"It's harder to do both," he said. "It messes with you."

- The strengths of Callahan's fourth team will include the linebackers on offense and the wide receivers on offense. "I think it's on the linebackers' shoulders to get this defense going and to get this defense into a unit, not just 11 guys," said senior middle linebacker Corey McKeon.

- The NFL Network televised the Spring Game on a delayed basis, with Callahan providing some analysis. As a result, he turned over the play-calling duties to offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Shawn Watson (Red team) and wide receivers coach Ted Gilmore (White team).

Callahan said he hadn't been in the pressbox for a game since 1998, at Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium, when he was offensive coordinator for the Oakland Raiders.

- The team met at 6:30 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during the spring to accommodate players' class schedules.

"I usually get up pretty early, but not at 6 o'clock in the morning," said junior wide receiver Nate Swift, who could depend on a wake-up call from Todd Peterson.

In a wide receivers phone tree initiated by Gilmore, Swift then called Chris Brooks, though that probably wasn't necessary. "He's usually always up here," Swift said.

"I don't know if he comes up early or what."

Thursday's final practice before the Spring Game was at 6:15. ■

GAME STATS

SCORING

April 14, 2007

Memorial Stadium Lincoln, Neb.
Attendance 54,288

	1	2	3	4	F
Nebraska White	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska Red	28	10	0	0	38

First Quarter

R Nunn Pass from Keller 14-yards
 (Henery Kick) 11:04 0 7
Drive: 11 plays 73 yds 3:56

R Ganz 10-yard Run
(Henry Kick) 04:50 0 14
Drive: 10 plays 80 yds 4:16

R Lucky 1-yard Run
(Henry Kick) 02:21

Second Quarter

Second Quarter			
R	Glenn 5-yard Run (Henery Kick) 10:26	0	35
	Drive: 8 plays 90 yds 3:03		
R	Henery 36-yard Field Goal 03:30	0	38
	Drive: 13 plays 57 yds 4:31		

TEAM STATS

	W	R
Total First Downs	2	27
Rushing	0	9
Passing	1	17
Penalty	1	1
Rushing Attempts	19	37
Yards Gained Rushing	28	183
Yards Lost Rushing	61	22
Net Yards Rushing	-33	161
Net Yards Passing	42	350
Passes Attempted	23	31
Passes Completed	8	21
Had Intercepted	1	0
Percent Completion	34.8%	67.7%
Yards per Attempt	1.8	11.3
Yards per Completion	5.2	16.7
Total Offensive Plays	42	68
Total Net Yard	9	511
Avg. Gain Per Play	0.2	7.5
Fumbles: No-Lost	0-0	4-2
Penalties: No-Yards	2-20	3-25
Punts: No-Yards	9-415	3-135
Avg. Per Punt	46.1	45.0
Avg. Net Punt	46.1	45.0
Punt Returns: No-Yards	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	7-142	1-11
Interception Returns: No-Yards	0-0	1-2
Fumble Returns: No-Yards	0-0	0-0
Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
Possession Time	26:36	33:24
Third-Down Conversions	1-13	6-11
Percentage	7.7%	54.5%
Fourth-Down Conversions	0-1	0-0
Percentage	0.0%	0.0%
Secks By: No-Yards	1-8	6-45

INJURED? DID NOT PLAY.

Players missing the Spring Game because of injuries included: Zac Lee, QB; Zackary Bowman, CB; Corey Young, DB; Ryan Ford, DB; Kenny Wilson, IB; Matt Senske, FB; Mike McNeil, TE; Craig Roark, DL; Mike Huff, OL; Andy Christensen, OL; Jacob Hickman, OL; Kevin Luhrs, DE; Seth Jensen, DT; Barry Turner, DE



Red I-back Cody Glenn (34) tries to get around White team cornerback Tyler Kester (19).

INDIVIDUAL STATS

WHITE

RED

RECRUITING

Close to Home

Five of first six commitments from Nebraska or adjoining states
By Rick Shaw

Due to its relatively modest population, the state of Nebraska normally produces only five to 10 Division I caliber football players per year. Those numbers, alone, aren't enough to build and maintain a tradition-rich football power in America's Heartland.

However, if you add in the top athletes from neighboring states like Colorado, Kansas, Iowa and Missouri, you have a solid athletic nucleus to recruit from and, with it, the ingredients to build a championship quality team.

That's the recruiting recipe that Nebraska coach Bill Callahan appears to be mixing up this year in Lincoln. Out of Nebraska's first six oral commitments for its recruiting class of



Trevor Robinson of Elkhorn High School gave Nebraska its second commitment from an in-state offensive lineman, joining Baker Steinkuhler of Lincoln Southwest High School, who committed last fall.

2008, five athletes either hail from inside the state boundaries or an adjoining state.

The Huskers already have received pledges from three of Rivals.com's top four preseason prospects out of Nebraska. Offensive linemen, Baker Steinkuhler (6-foot-6,

290 pounds) of Lincoln's Southwest High School and Trevor Robinson (6-5, 300) of Omaha (Elkhorn) are both regarded by Rivals.com to be among the nation's top 100 high school recruits (at any position). Steinkuhler is a strong candidate to earn a five-star ranking from Rivals later this summer, a designation only given to the nation's top 25 to 30 prospects.

The other in-state commit, running back Collins Okafor (6-1, 210) of Omaha (Westside), is a raw talent with the speed (4.5-second 40-yard dash) and athleticism (33-inch vertical jump) to make an eventual impact in Lincoln.

Nebraska also has an early commitment from the top prospect out of the state of Iowa, offensive lineman Dan Hoch (6-6, 295) of Harlan. Hoch is also considered by Rivals.com to be one of the nation's top 100 prospects heading into the 2007 season.

Bryce Givens, a 6-6, 265-pound offensive line prospect out of Denver (Mullen). Colo., turned down scholarship offers from Michigan, UCLA, Colorado and



Bryce Givens

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2008

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown (School)
Bryce Givens	OL	6-6	265	5.1	Denver, Colo. (J.K. Mullen)
Dan Hoch	OL	6-6	295	5.21	Harlan, Iowa
Collins Okafor	RB	6-1	210	4.54	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
Trevor Robinson	OL	6-5	300	5.2	Omaha, Neb. (Elkhorn)
Baker Steinkuhler	OL	6-6	290	4.88	Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest)
David Whitmore	DB	6-2	190	4.5	Port Arthur, Texas (Memorial)

For more daily recruiting information, visit HuskersIllustrated.com, a member of the Rivals.com network.

RECRUITING NOTES

Linemen Join Husker Class

By Sean Stevens

In the world of college football recruiting, it's important for a school to take care of its own "backyard." In other words, a school needs to sign the players in its own state and the surrounding states that it recruits hard. The Nebraska coaches have talked about building a 500-mile fence around Lincoln and keeping those players inside that fence.

In the 2008 recruiting year, Nebraska has been successful thus far. As reported in prior issues, NU has closed the borders in-state, gaining commitments from offensive lineman Baker Steinkuhler of Lincoln Southwest and running back Collins Okafor of Omaha Westside. It also dipped into neighboring Iowa to grab the top prospect in that state — offensive lineman Dan Hoch.

In the past month, the Huskers have added another top national prospect from Nebraska and one from western neighbor Colorado.

Trevor Robinson, a 6-foot-5, 300-pound offensive lineman from Elkhorn, Neb., gave the NU coaches his oral commitment April 7. Robinson was one of the more hotly recruited players on a national basis, sporting offers from Notre Dame, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Texas A&M, among others.

Robinson had narrowed his list to NU, Michigan, and Notre Dame and taken unofficial visits to all three campuses before announcing his commitment.

"There were a lot of things that led to this," Robinson said of his decision to pick Nebraska. "The biggest thing was I started to realize Nebraska had everything Michigan and Notre Dame had, so being close to home was the biggest part of why I decided Nebraska."

The fifth player to give his pledge to the Husker staff was Bryce Givens, a 6-6, 265-pound offensive tackle prospect out of Denver, Colo. Givens chose Nebraska over offers from schools around the country, including UCLA, Michigan, Colorado, and Louisville.

Givens talked about what swung his mind toward Nebraska.

"Coach (Bill) Callahan and the entire staff and the tradition at Nebraska and the other offensive linemen that have committed there definitely had some pull . . . just because I know we are going to be a really strong offensive line class," he said.

This gives the Huskers four offensive line recruits committed for the recruiting cycle, and all four of them are ranked among the top 250 overall players in the country by Rivals.com. Steinkuhler, Robinson and Hoch are among the top 100.

The sixth recruit to give his oral pledge was defensive back David Whitmore of Port Arthur, Texas. Whitmore is the son of former NFL safety David Whitmore. The elder Whitmore now lives in Missouri.

The 6-2, 190-pound younger Whitmore could be termed as a "soft commitment," however. He has spoken in other interviews with glowing praise about the LSU program, but the Tigers have yet to offer a scholarship. He claimed to be solid to Nebraska when asked, however.

"Yes sir," he said with some hesitation. "I like Nebraska. It is a good school. It seems like a good school. They have won a lot of championships. I used to watch Nebraska on TV and television and stuff." ■

others to join the Big Red fold. Regarded as one of the top three players in Colorado, Rivals also tags Givens as one of the nation's top 250 high school football prospects.

Despite the early returns, Nebraska hopes to continue to build upon its tremendous early recruiting success in the Midwest. The Huskers continue to make a strong push for many of the other top athletes from across the Big 12 region.

At or near the top of the Huskers' wish list for quarterbacks in this recruiting go-around is Blaine Gabbert of Ballwin (Parkway West), Mo. The 6-5, 229-pound signal caller is another athlete who Rivals.com regards as a preseason top 100 national prospect.

Having already secured scholarship offers from several universities around the country, Gabbert appears to have narrowed his recruiting scope to four schools: Alabama, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska. The talented quarterback, accompanied by his parents, recently visited Lincoln to take in the annual Husker Spring Game. He admits, that Nebraska has a lot to offer.

"Nebraska was awesome," Gabbert said. "You could say the facilities and the coaches are simply spectacular."

"Nebraska is definitely up there with me. I've been talking to them a bunch lately, and everything I saw there was awesome, so they're definitely in my top group."

Gabbert earned first-team all-league honors as a junior, after passing for 1,523 yards and 20 touchdowns. Though rumored to be a slight lean to the home state Missouri Tigers (he was scheduled to visit the MU Spring Game on April 21), Gabbert has pledged to make a definitive college announcement sometime in the next couple of weeks.

"I'd like to decide before summer," Gabbert said. "At least, that's what my plan is anyway."

The top linebacker prospect in the country could very well be Arthur



Blaine Gabbert



Arthur Brown, a top linebacker recruit from Wichita, Kan., is the nephew of former Nebraska defensive lineman Lawrence Pete.

Brown (6-1, 225) out of Wichita (East), Kan. Already holding offers from Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Southern Cal and Nebraska, to name a few, Brown is one of just a handful of national recruits who, literally, will have an opportunity to go just about anywhere to play his college football.

A preseason, Rivals top-100 honoree, Brown spent some time in Lincoln in late March with his uncle, former Husker defensive lineman Lawrence Pete. The blue-chip prospect was able to get a good feel for what the Huskers have to offer.

"Nebraska, by far, has the nicest facilities of any school that I've been to or have seen at this point," Brown said. "I also really like the coaches. Coach (Ted) Gilmore seemed genuinely concerned about me and my family making the right choice. I also like the head coach (Bill Callahan). He seems to really know his X's and O's."

"I'm impressed with Nebraska. I know that they lose three or four linebackers to graduation this year, so I could possibly be a freshman starter there. I hope to make it back there soon and check things out further."

Brown has built a strong relationship with Oklahoma defensive coordinator Brent Venables, which may make the Sooners the early front-runner in this recruiting battle. However, the Kansas prep phenom who tallied 132 tackles and 12 sacks on his way to first-team all-state honors in 2006, said it will be a few more months before he makes his college intention known.

The 6-4, 200-pound athlete has already garnered scholarship offers from eight programs, including Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas State and Northwestern. However, at this time, he appears to be leaning toward staying in Nebraska.

"If I had to decide today, I'd probably say Nebraska, or maybe Iowa State," Fisher said. "I hope to make my decision before the season starts and, if not, then the early part of my senior season."

Other athletes from around the area that have received early scholarship offers from the Huskers include linebacker Jon Major (6-4, 230) of Parker (Ponderosa) Colo., wide receiver Wes Kemp (6-4, 226) of St. Louis (DeSmet Jesuit) and tight end Spencer Ladner (6-7, 230) of Kansas City (Pembroke Hill), Mo.

The Huskers are setting the early groundwork for a future championship team by placing a high degree of focus on reeling in the Midwest's best. ■

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Learning Experience

Young Huskers know what they need to do to return to NCAA Tournament

By Mike Babcock

Nebraska was among just four of 335 NCAA Division I women's basketball teams to use the same starting lineup for every game during the 2006-07 season. And like Duke and Bowling Green, two of the other three, coach Connie Yori's Huskers advanced to the NCAA Tournament.

Stability often correlates to success. Four of the five starters for Yori's 22-10 team were seniors, however, which means there will be significant changes in 2007-08. Plus, Danielle Page will be the only senior.

So the question in looking ahead is: Will the program slip from the near-steady climb it has made during Yori's five seasons in charge? Page is convinced that it won't.

Being the only senior, "I think it does put a little bit of pressure on me," she said recently. "But I'm not going to be the only person that's going to be looked to for leadership."

Kelsey Griffin, the fifth starter, and TK LaFleur, both of whom will be juniors, can add leadership. And those who were freshmen "it's not like they didn't see the floor at all," said Page.

"Some of them got significant minutes. They know what they're doing. So it's not going to negate everything

we did because we have such a young team. It'll be interesting, I think."

Plus, the young players now have the experience of an NCAA Tournament, which is like nothing else, according to Page. "It's good they can get it so early in their careers," she said.

"They know what they need to do to get back there."

What they need to do is listen to Page, who aspires to be a coach when she's finished playing, or at least follow her example. The 6-foot-2 forward from Monument, Colo., underwent surgery on her right knee at the end of June and wasn't expected to return until the conference season began in January. She was back for the final exhibition, however, and played in every regular-season game.

And that wasn't the first dramatic turnaround in her basketball career. She didn't begin playing until her eighth-grade year, though "playing" might be overstating what she did. She was third-string, "just so tall and lanky," she said. "I didn't know where my arms were going in the eighth grade."

"I was more of a soccer kind of person up until the middle of high school."

With encouragement from her dad, she stuck with basketball and



made varsity as a freshman. "That was really when I went, 'Maybe I have a future here,'" said Page. "I think I grew into my body."

She has had to do more than grow into her body since arriving at Nebraska. Dealing with the physical inside play in the Big 12 requires dedication in the weight room, particularly during the off-season, when progress is more noticeable. The game is much different than in high school.

Page, the first to commit in Yori's 2003 recruiting class, was the Colorado Springs Gazette's athlete of the year in girls basketball as a senior at Lewis-Palmer High. She would stay after practice for an hour, shooting, and think she was working hard, "really getting after it," she said. "But I came here and it's a whole step up from that, a whole different level of commitment, really."

After this season ended, she didn't take a break, continuing to work on her own until the team's four-day-a-



Nebraska's Danielle Page (52) blocks a shot by Temple's Fatima Maddox (30) in the NCAA Tournament game March 18 at Raleigh, N.C.

76-67 victory against No. 13-ranked Baylor at the Devaney Sports Center in early February.

She also contributed a career-high 11 rebounds to the upset.

Page finished the season strong. In the 64-61 loss to Temple in the first round of the NCAA Tournament at Raleigh, N.C., she pulled down eight rebounds and blocked five shots. And in a 79-76 overtime loss against Iowa State at the Big 12 Tournament, she scored eight consecutive points at the end of regulation and the beginning of overtime to keep Husker hopes of advancing alive.

Her two free throws with 9.7 seconds remaining in regulation gave them a 70-67 lead. She finished the game with 16 points, eight rebounds and two blocked shots.

The Huskers didn't finish strong, considering they lost six of their final seven games. But the last three losses all were by three points. "They just kept slipping away," said Page. "It was a couple of possessions each game, and it was real frustrating knowing that, 'It's not like we're getting blown out by teams or we're just not competing.' We just weren't getting enough plays to win the game."

The slide began with back-to-back losses at the Devaney Sports Center, 70-69 against Texas Tech and 65-53 against a Missouri team the Huskers defeated at Columbia 76-66.

The team might have become fatigued mentally, Page said. "I think maybe it put some added pressure on us at the end of the season, where it wasn't like the beginning of the year and we were going in to win the game. At the end of the year we were going into games not to lose."

"That really affects your mentality when you're playing."

A victory against Temple would have meant playing top-ranked Duke in the second round of the regional, and "we were really looking forward to maybe playing Duke," said Page.

Temple played the Blue Devils tough, losing by 10 points, an indication of where Nebraska's program was, and is, according to Page. "Obviously, we're getting better tal-

week off-season program began — and continued until the end of the semester.

The program includes lifting for arms two days and for legs two days, with Wednesdays and weekends off. The program is optional, of course. All such off-season programs are. But it is "highly encouraged," Page said with a smile. "It's not optional for me. I'm there."

Even when she goes home for the better part of a month following semester exams, before returning for the second of the university's three summer sessions (she's a first-team Academic All-American, majoring in communications), she plans to follow a regular workout schedule.

Her mom is retired Air Force, she said, so she trains at the Air Force Academy.

"It's nice when I do sprints up there because when I come back down to the lower elevation (in Nebraska), it makes for nice running.

"Oh, I've got all this oxygen," she said.

In addition to endurance, she needs strength, which required her learning how to lift. During the summer before her freshman year at Nebraska, she "was hitting the gym pretty hard," she said. "But I had no idea about the level of intensity you need in the weight room to survive here."

"I don't know how other leagues are, but I know the Big 12, it's so physical in the lane. You have to be strong. You have to finish strong. They really let you play down there, and I'm a big fan of it, the refs letting us go at it. I think it makes the game more fun to watch, and more fun to play."

Page has held her own. She was second on the team to Griffin in rebounding, averaging 5.5 per game, and she set a school record for blocked shots by a junior, with 60, including a record nine of them in a



NU's Kelsey Griffin (eft) and Chelsea Aubry (45) defend Temple's Lady Comfort.

ent -wise," she said.

"The recruits that are coming in, I think, are going to add a ton. I just think that we're building a program to go to the NCAA Tournament every year, as opposed to just making a post-season tournament or just winning a game in the Big 12 Tournament. So I think our expectations have grown."

And those expectations will be justified in 2007-08, even with the loss of the four starters. ■

WOMEN'S RESULTS

Overall: 22-10/Big 12: 11-5

Nov. 10	*Arizona State	L 87-60
Nov. 12	*Florida Atlantic	W 93-53
Nov. 13	*New Mexico	W 66-59
Nov. 17	Cal State Fullerton	W 76-62
Nov. 24	@UC Irvine	W 80-66
Nov. 26	@USC	W 72-65
Nov. 28	Texas-Pan American	W 77-37
Dec. 5	Minnesota	L 74-65
Dec. 9	Michigan	W 87-47
Dec. 16	Northwestern	W 73-58
Dec. 19	@Creighton	W 60-57
Dec. 21	Nicholls State	W 80-42
Dec. 28	**NC State	W 94-74
Dec. 29	**Florida	W 81-73
Jan. 3	@Texas	W 79-75
Jan. 6	Oklahoma	L 77-69
Jan. 13	@Kansas	W 63-54
Jan. 17	Kansas State	W 70-63
Jan. 20	@Missouri	W 76-66
Jan. 24	@Texas A&M	L 66-65
Jan. 27	Kansas	W 78-58
Jan. 31	Iowa State	W 62-49
Feb. 3	Baylor	W 76-67
Feb. 7	@Kansas State	W 62-55
Feb. 10	@Colorado	W 54-44
Feb. 14	Texas Tech	L 70-69
Feb. 17	Missouri	L 65-53
Feb. 20	@Iowa State	L 64-53
Feb. 24	@Oklahoma State	L 63-60
Feb. 27	Colorado	W 90-70
Mar. 7	***Iowa State	L 79-76 ot
Mar. 18	****Temple	L 64-61

*Veterans Day Classic, Tempe, Ariz.

**State Farm Classic, Gainesville, Fla.

***Big 12 Tournament, Oklahoma City

****NCAA Tournament, Raleigh, N.C.

FINAL WOMEN'S STATISTICS

Player	—TOTAL—			—3-PTS—			—REBOUNDS—													
	GP-GS	FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-A	Pct	FT-FTA	Pct	Off	Def	Tot	Avg	PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl	Pts	Avg	
Hardy, Kiera	32-32	177-424	.417	71-193	.368	89-108	.824	15	82	97	3.0	69	0	83	85	0	33	514	16.1	
Griffin, Kelsey	32-32	177-324	.546	1-9	.111	125-173	.723	96	169	265	8.3	78	0	35	63	19	36	480	15.0	
Aubry, Chelsea	32-32	106-221	.480	33-76	.434	23-31	.742	42	101	143	4.5	53	0	30	59	5	12	268	8.4	
Page, Danielle	32-0	86-179	.480	0-0	.000	51-85	.600	51	124	175	5.5	76	3	26	37	60	16	223	7.0	
Spiric, Jelena	32-32	72-176	.409	22-65	.338	33-45	.733	42	97	139	4.3	70	2	70	83	3	31	199	6.2	
LaFleur, TK	32-0	62-158	.392	16-53	.302	34-46	.739	27	60	87	2.7	61	1	37	47	4	27	174	5.4	
Montgomery, Cory	32-0	62-126	.492	3-3	1.000	41-56	.732	19	50	69	2.2	27	0	15	26	3	5	168	5.3	
Ford, Ashley	32-32	30-90	.333	12-51	.235	25-37	.676	2	48	50	1.6	55	0	75	47	1	30	97	3.0	
Bober, Nikki	9-0	8-14	.571	0-0	.000	8-14	.571	3	4	7	0.8	4	0	0	5	2	3	24	2.7	
Turner, Yvonne	28-0	20-59	.339	7-27	.259	18-30	.600	14	30	44	1.6	36	0	19	38	2	18	65	2.3	
Neals, Nicole	24-0	16-56	.286	8-39	.205	8-12	.667	5	18	23	1.0	20	0	18	17	0	10	48	2.0	
Kuhlmann, Kala	27-0	9-23	.391	0-3	.000	2-3	.667	4	6	10	0.4	6	0	9	15	2	1	20	0.7	
TEAM								65	59	124	3.9	0						9		
Total	32	825-1850	.446	173-519	.333	457-840	.714	385	848	1233	38.5	555	6	417	531	101	222	2280	71.2	
Opponents	32	733-1884	.389	170-480	.354	367-651	.666	401	749	1160	35.9	615	-	379	541	106	244	2003	62.6	



COOT DIAZ

Nebraska senior guard Kiera Hardy (left), was selected by the Connecticut Sun in the WNBA draft.

BASKETBALL NOTES

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Kiera Hardy, Chelsea Aubry, Jelena Spiric and Ashley Ford, the departing seniors, accounted for 47.3 percent of the scoring and 34.8 percent of the rebounding, so coach Connie Yori has a solid foundation on which to build, beginning with Griffin, who averaged 15.0 points and 8.2 rebounds.

Griffin, a first-team all-conference selection along with Hardy, had 10 double-doubles and was chosen Big 12 player of the week twice. She ranked eighth or higher in the conference in six categories: double-doubles, scoring, rebounding, field goal percentage, defensive rebounding and offensive rebounding. Her season scoring high was 24 points; her rebounding high was 13, three times.

She also led the Huskers in free throws made (125) and attempted (173).

TRIPLE THREAT

Aubry led the Huskers and tied for second in the Big 12 in 3-point shooting percentage. She made 33-of-76 for a .434 percentage, second-best in school history. Kate Galligan hit 52-of-114 from 3-point range in 1995-96 (.456). Aubry finished with a .364 career percentage from 3-point range.

Aubry's low-key leadership also will be missed in 2007-08. "I saw how she conducted herself around the team," said Page. "She never yelled at the girls, but if they did something wrong, she'd go over and talk to them. I think they responded well to that. So I'll try to keep that up."

Hardy finished as Nebraska's all-time 3-point shooter, of course. She hit 71-of-193 as a senior to end her career at No. 6 on the Big 12's all-time list with 267 made.

NEXT LEVEL

Hardy, a three-time first-team all-conference honoree, was selected by the Connecticut Sun in the WNBA draft in early April, one of five Big 12 players taken and just the second Husker to be drafted by the WNBA. Nicole Kubik was the 15th overall pick in the first round of the 2007 draft, selected by the Los Angeles Sparks. Anna DeForge, who currently plays in the WNBA, was a second pick of the San Jose Lasers in

the 1998 American Basketball League draft.

Hardy was the final player drafted, the 39th pick overall.



Ade Dagunduro

NUMBERS GAME

Nebraska men's basketball coach Doc Sadler continues to up-grade talent. The latest addition is Ade Dagunduro, the brother of former Cornhusker football player Ola Dagunduro. Ade (pronounced uh-DAY) is a 6-foot-5, 190-pound swingman from Antelope Valley (Calif.) College, where he averaged 18.2 points and 8.8 rebounds as a sophomore. He shot 50.1 percent from the field and had 86 steals.

He played one season at Inglewood, Calif., High School and one season at Mt. San Antonio (Calif.) College, picking Nebraska over Penn State and Nevada-Las Vegas.

Dagunduro is the sixth member of Sadler's second recruiting class, joining Alex Chapman, Alonzo Edwards, Steve Harley, Cookie Miller, Shang Ping and Brandon Richardson.

In addition, the roster includes USC transfer Jeremy Barr.

Even though another recruit who signed a letter of intent in November, Rishawn Norwood, won't be coming, the Cornhuskers would be over the NCAA scholarship limit of 13 if all arrive and are eligible. That's counting the departure of two more scholarship players in late March.

Neither Jamel White nor Kyle Marks will return next season. Marks decided to transfer closer to home, according to Sadler, and White, who was suspended in mid-February, has been dismissed. "I feel like sometimes you have to make decisions about what is best for a program, and after visiting with Jamel, he and I came to a mutual agreement that it would be best if he moved on," Sadler said.

White played in 22 games, including 16 starts, before his suspension. He averaged 9.3 points and 2.4 assists. Marks saw limited action in 18 games, averaging 2.0 points and 1.1 rebounds.

Those returning for Sadler's first team include Alex Maric, Ryan Anderson, Sek Henry, Jay-R Strowbridge, Chris Balham and Mike Smith, as well as walk-on Paul Velander.

The number of scholarship players has to be 13 when fall-semester classes begin. ■



Kiera Hardy

He Wants His

Brown says hitting streak means something only if it contributes to the team's success

By Mike Babcock

His hitting streak needed qualifying. It meant something only if it contributed to the team's success, Andrew Brown said, and it hadn't been doing that until lately.

Brown talked about the streak, which was at 11 games, after going 1-for-4 with a walk in a 7-6 victory against Iowa on a cold, rain-soaked April night at Hawks Field.

At the beginning of the streak the hits were coming in the early innings, and "I didn't even notice them because the rest of my at-bats hadn't been going that well," he said.

By week's end, following a three-game series at Oklahoma, the hitting streak was 15 games. And the hits were contributing to the Cornhuskers' success. In the second and third games, both victories, Brown went 6-for-8 with four doubles, a team-high sixth home run and five runs scored.

He had only one hit in the first game, but the team managed only four total in a 3-0 loss.

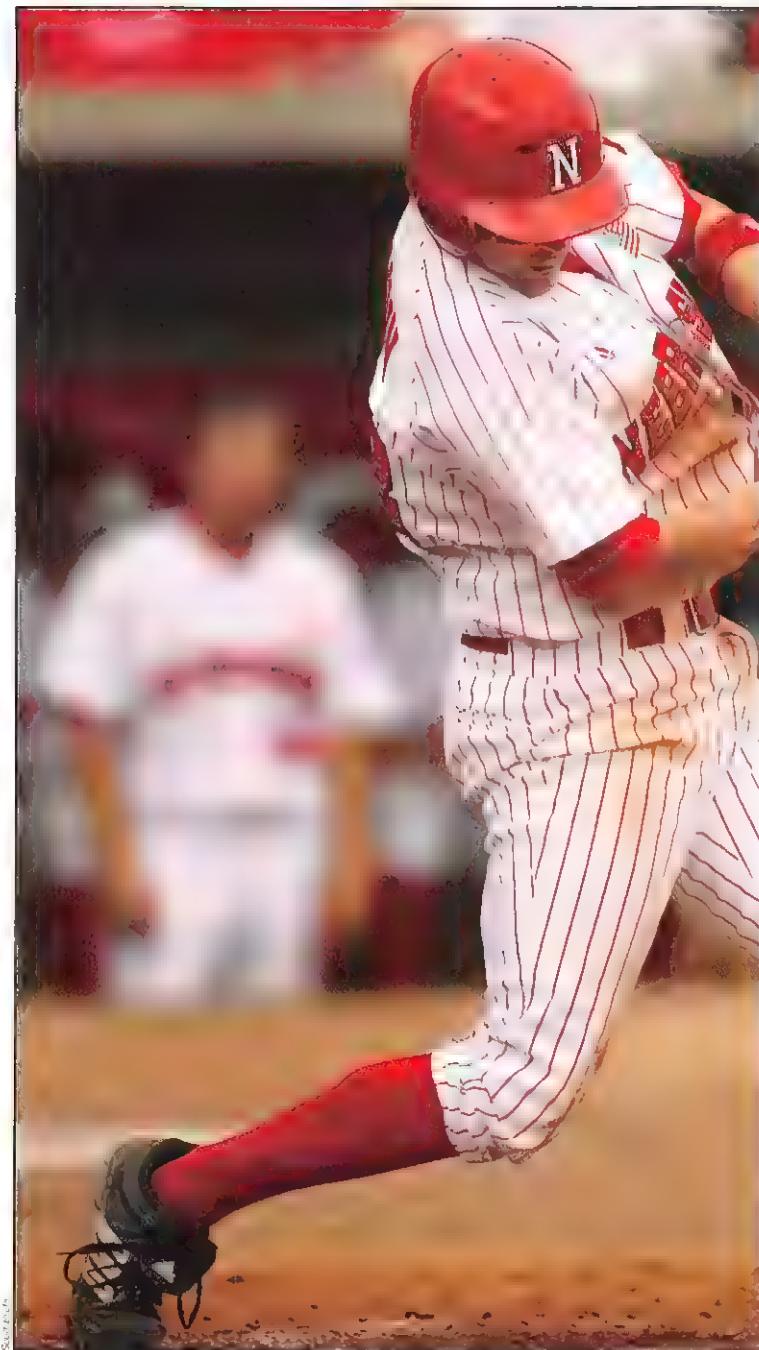
In any case, after a slow start, "it turned around," said Brown, Nebraska's only senior position player. "It really hasn't bothered me. I'm just trying to stay consistent, play to the best of my ability."

Going into a crucial series against Texas, he was hitting well over .300, second best on the team.

Brown knows something about hitting. And though he does it with the collegiate game's aluminum bats, he knows something about wooden bats as well. "I love hitting with wood bats," he said.

"When you square up the ball with a wood bat, there's not a better feeling."

He has hit with wooden bats the past two summers, in the Texas Collegiate League and then with the Beatrice Bruins. He was the TCL player of the year, hitting .311 with 13 home runs and 39 RBIs in 39 games. Most impres-



sive, though, were his 12 home runs and 31 RBIs in 26 games in July.

Last summer at Beatrice he hit .386 with nine home runs. And he did it with two wooden bats, opting for a slightly smaller one for the season-ending National Baseball Congress Tournament.

Hits to Matter



The pitchers were better and threw harder, "so I got a lighter one," he said.

Cornhusker and Bruin teammate Thad Weber's dad used the Internet to find some good wooden bats, said Brown. Weber, also a pitcher, hit .327 with six home runs and 26 RBIs.

First baseman Andrew Brown, Nebraska's only senior position player, was hitting well over .300 through mid-April. His average was NU's second highest. Junior Jeff Tezak was the leading hitter.

Brown's knowledge of wooden bats goes beyond what he has learned swinging them. The Carrollton, Texas, native developed in the Dallas Bat baseball academy, and worked there during the summer he played for the Denton Outlaws in the Texas Collegiate League.

Besides the academy, D-Bat is "the world's premier wood bat company" according to its Web site. So Brown selected bats not only for himself but for his Denton teammates, too.

He was able to "hand-pick the best-feeling bats," he said.

Wooden bats are made of maple and ash, and none are "exactly the same," he said. "You're never going to find the same type of wood bat, or if you do, you're lucky. I've never swung a bat that feels exactly the same as another. They're all different. You've got different types of grains.

"You want to find one with a low grain count. It's thicker and denser, and it will last longer."

Aluminum bats are more forgiving than wooden bats, of course. And they don't break, or at least rarely do. With a metal bat, "you get jammed and you can squeak it over the infielders' heads and you've got a single, maybe a double," said Brown. But the result is more satisfying than the feel.

In contrast, a poor swing with a wooden bat, "you hit it in one small part of the bat that's wrong, and it's going to shatter and the ball's not going to go but maybe 5 or 10 feet," he said.

"Metal bats don't break, so you can get bloop hits. Wood bat, no way."

Going from a wooden bat to an aluminum bat isn't a problem. Good contact is good contact despite the medium. But going from an aluminum bat to a wooden bat takes some adjustment, in his case "about a good month to where you get the feel and everything starts flowing," Brown said.

Everything seemed to be flowing for him in April. The first week of the month he was named Big 12 player of the week after hitting .500 with four doubles, a triple and five runs scored in four games, three of them victories. His on-

BASEBALL NOTES

SCORING EXPLOSION

Andrew Brown broke out of a 0-for-7 slump with three consecutive doubles (tying a school record) against Missouri on March 25. He completed his first four-hit day as a Cornhusker with a home run in 12-run sixth inning in the 16-1 victory. His solo home run followed Jeff Tezak's grand slam. And two batters later, Craig Corriston hit a home run. Tezak batted a second-time in the inning with the bases loaded and hit a double, driving in two runs. The 12 runs were Nebraska's most in an inning since March 16, 1999, when it scored 13 against Chicago State, in a 50-3 victory — yes, 50-3.

"I don't think I've ever been a part of an inning like that," said Brown. "It lets us know we're capable of doing what we're here to do. We know we can score runs. We know how to do it."

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

After a slow start this season, junior left-hander Tony Watson settled in against Missouri. In the first game of the series, he pitched 10 innings, a career high and the longest by a Cornhusker since the formation of the Big 12 Conference in 1996. He allowed just three hits and struck out what was then a season-high seven, retiring 14 of the final 15 batters he faced. Nebraska lost, however, 5-1 in 11 innings.

Watson was named the conference pitcher of the week for his effort.

Two weeks later, he shared conference-pitcher-of-the-week honors with Missouri's Rick Zagone after allowing just two runs in a complete-game victory against No. 13-ranked Oklahoma State. Watson struck out a career-high 12 and didn't allow a walk. His previous strikeout high was 10 in 2006.

Oklahoma State went into the game with a Big 12-best .354 team batting average.

MOVING UP

Junior right-hander Johnny Dorn began conference play as the No. 3 starter but has moved into the second-game spot after Charlie Shirek struggled. Dorn's victory against Oklahoma in the second game of a double-header, forced by inclement weather on Friday, was the 27th of his career. He was three short of tying Jeff Anderson (1981-84) for second on the Cornhuskers' all-time list.

Shane Kornine (1999-02) is atop the list with 41 victories. ■



Tony Watson



Johnny Dorn

Former Nebraska All-America third baseman Alex Gordon made his Major League debut with the Kansas City Royals on opening day, April 2. The Royals' 2005 No. 1 draft pick (second overall) went 0-for-3 against Curt Schilling and the Boston Red Sox in a 7-1 Kansas City victory. Three days later, Gordon recorded his first hit — a single — off Boston's Daisuke "Dice-K" Matsuzaka. The highlight of his slow start came in the seventh game of the season, when Gordon snapped an 0-for-13 skid with his first Major League home run, a two-run shot to right off Josh Towers April 10 in Toronto.

base percentage was .556 and his slugging percentage was .875.

In a series-clinching victory against Oklahoma State at Hawks Field, he went 3-for-4 with a double and a triple. A week later, he continued his offensive assault at Oklahoma.

Even though the Cornhuskers struggled early in conference play, losing their first three series, Brown remained optimistic, with the prospect of three consecutive Big 12 series at home before finishing the regular season at Kansas. The conference tournament is scheduled to start May 23.

"You've got to be optimistic," he said. "If you're not, then it's not worth playing. We've got to win the rest of this season to get into the place we want to be, which is near the top."

And Brown's hits have got to matter in order for him to care about them. ■



SOFTBALL NOTES

ON THE RISE

Coach Rhonda Revelle's softball team swept a two-game series against No. 11-ranked Texas and Bowlin Stadium in mid-April, shaking the effects of back-to-back 1-0 losses at No. 4-ranked Texas A&M the week before. Senior Jamie Waldecker hit a two-run single in the 11th inning for a 5-4 victory in the first game, then sophomore Molly Hill and senior Ashley DeBuhr combined to pitch the Huskers to a 2-0 victory in the second. The fact that Texas was nationally ranked made the victories special.

"We're really trying to play one game at a time and focus on Nebraska, not worry too much about the opponent right now," said Revelle. "But I'll tell you, everything is building upon each other. In this game confidence is so important and we have good confidence right now."

The Huskers, who were 8-7 in early March, improved to 32-13 with the sweep. Nebraska has won 30 or more games in 10 consecutive seasons, since finishing 29-24 in 1997.

DEBUHR DE-BEST

DeBuhr, who allowed only two earned runs and struck out 14 in the first-game victory against Texas, was named Big 12 pitcher of the week and co-player of the week nationally for her efforts in victories against South Dakota State and Creighton as well as against the Longhorns.

She struck out 37 in 27 innings for the week, to increase her career strikeout total to 884, second on the all-time list behind Peaches James (2001-04). Leigh Ann Walker (1999-02) and Husker assistant Lori Sippel (1985-88) are the only Husker pitchers to strike out at least 800 during their careers.

DeBuhr pitched her third career no-hitter against Texas Tech



Ashley DeBuhr

at Bowlin Stadium, on April Fools Day. She struck out 13 in the 4-0 victory. She is tied with James, Jenny Voss (1997-00) and Summer Tobias (2003-04) on Nebraska's career list for no-hitters. Sippel (1985-88) is first with six.

STINGY WITH RUNS

Hill, from Wayne, Neb., pitched five innings in the second game against Texas, allowing four hits and striking out five, before giving way to DeBuhr. With the five shutout innings, Hill's earned-run average dipped to a Big 12-leading 0.99. Two weeks before, she was named the Big 12 pitcher of the week after not allowing a run in three consecutive starts and striking out 27 in 19 innings.

WELCOME BACK WALDECKER

Waldecker, a two-time all-conference selection, returned to the lineup in a late-March double-header against Colorado State, after being sidelined by a broken left hand. She started the second game at catcher, after not playing there since Feb. 24, a stretch of 25 games.

PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY

Not only have DeBuhr and Hill provided solid pitching, but also "our defense has been outstanding," Revelle said. "Pitching and defense, they go hand-in-hand. It's like peanut butter and jelly. It wouldn't matter how well our pitchers were throwing if we didn't have the defense behind them."

FAN SUPPORT

The second game against Texas drew an enthusiastic crowd of 712, a season high, on a Sunday afternoon with 60-degree temperatures. "This crowd was wonderful," said Revelle. "It's the first day we've had a warm day to play. I can't say I really blame them to wait to come out in droves." ■

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10 QUESTIONS

with **MEGHAN MULLIN** So. Outfielder Mesa, Ariz.

First of all, Meghan Mullin's parents are both from Omaha. So that's one of the reasons Rhonda Revelle was able to recruit her out of the Arizona sun. She has relatives in Omaha, which means her parents can double up, visit family as well as watch her play softball. And can she ever play.

She has been the Huskers' leading hitter this season, far and away, the only one over .300. After going 4-for-8 in a two-game sweep of No. 11-ranked Texas on the weekend of the football team's Spring Game, Mullin was batting .338. She had struck out just 11 times in 139 official at-bats.

Last season, her first at Nebraska, she accepted a role as a back-up right fielder, despite an impressive resume that included a .567 batting average with a .611 on-base percentage, 23 runs-batted-in and 16 stolen bases (she also leads the Huskers) as a senior at Mesa's Seton Catholic.

Being a back-up "was a little bit of an adjustment," she said. "But I think one of the things the coaches really put inside of us is, you have a role on this team and no matter what that role is, you take pride in it and you work hard with it. So that was my role last year."

Her role this year includes leadership responsibilities. The roster has no juniors, so "I was forced to be a veteran early on," she said. "I'm having fun out here."

She also has adjusted to Nebraska and its weather, sort of.

"I enjoy Nebraska," she said. "It's a nice state."

What's the best movie you've seen recently?

"The Departed. That's my at-bat song, the theme song. I'm a big fan of the whole Irish-Boston connection and a big fan of Mark Wahlberg and Jack Nicholson. I like the actors in it, really. I'm Irish. My mom's taught me my culture really well, and I'm a big fan of Boston, too, so I'm going this summer finally. I've never been there, haven't had time with softball."

Sky diving, bungee jumping or rock climbing?

"Rock climbing. I think I'd do rock climbing before I did the other two. I could control my own fate when I rock climb. I couldn't control the others."

If your life were made into a movie, who would play the part of you?

"Oh, I don't know, probably Reese Witherspoon. She looks nothing like me, but I like her."

Who's the funniest player on the team?

"Brittany Pascale, what she says, the way she says it, everything. She's my roommate and I'm always laughing at her, all the time. She doesn't even have to try sometimes."



SCOTT SAWYER

If you could spend 30 minutes with a celebrity, sports or otherwise, who would it be and what would you ask?

"Probably Derek Jeter, and I'd just ask him how he stays so intense, where he gets his heart to play all the time. I admire the way he plays. I'm not a Yankees fan. I'm a players fan. I like certain players on different teams, and he's at the top. I'd want to know how he stays so consistent."

If you had \$100,000 to spend and you had to spend it, what would you buy?

"I'd go shopping first, for clothes. I'd go to Omaha, probably. I went shopping in Omaha yesterday, actually. I'd probably go to like Bed Bath & Beyond and then Von Maur or something. I'd buy a new car, and then I'd probably buy my friends and family stuff."

Other than family and friends, what do you miss most about Mesa?

"The weather. It's hard to get ready for a game when you're freezing and bundled up. That's probably the biggest thing I miss. When your hands are cold, it's a little harder to swing and it's hard to get your arm warm. But I think I've gotten more used to it since last year. It is a little bit mental. But once you start playing, you just kind of get over it."

What's the best thing served at the training table?

"I haven't been there this year since I don't eat there anymore but probably chicken quarters. That's my favorite. It's the seasoning they put on it. I don't know what it is, but I like it. I cook at home. I make spaghetti a lot. My roommate's Italian (Pascale). She likes spaghetti. We grill a lot."

Justin Timberlake or John Mayer?

"Justin Timberlake. I like John Mayer a lot. That's a tough one. But I like Justin Timberlake more. I like the way he dances. And the music gets me going a little bit in the morning."

"Survivor" or "American Idol"?

"'American Idol.' I'm a TV person but not much for reality (TV). I'm more of a 'Law & Order' person, sports person. But 'American Idol,' I've been watching it more this year." ■

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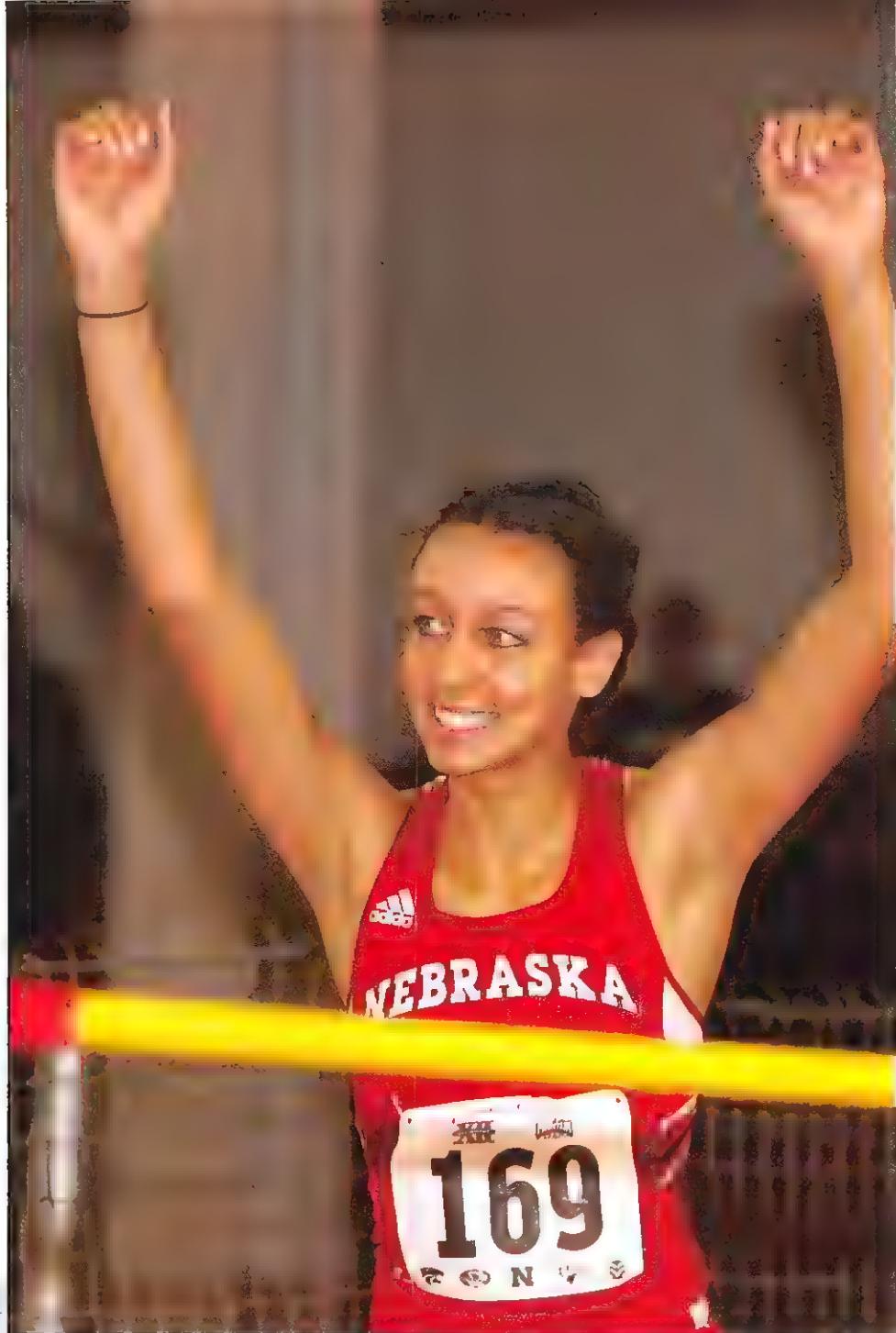


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TRACK AND FIELD

Raisin' the Bar



Freshman Epley Bullock cleared the 6-foot mark at both the Big 12 Indoor Championships Feb. 23-24 at Ames, Iowa, and the NCAA Indoor Championships March 9-10 at Fayetteville, Ark.

After clearing the 6-foot mark, NU freshman is aiming higher

BY KATELYN KERKHOVE

When Epley Bullock walked onto the track for the first time as a Cornhusker, she had little doubt about her abilities. Bullock, a petite freshman with a

big smile and bright eyes, had already cleared a 6-foot bar in competition. In fact, she had cleared it when she was a sophomore in high school.

But now, with collegiate honors to be had and NCAA Division I titles to be won, the Allen, Texas, native real-

ized even higher bars would have to be cleared. Not that it's scary. But the heights have taken on an entirely different meaning at this point in her career.

"I was just talking (to Nebraska coach Gary Pepin) about that," Bullock said. "It's hard to jump higher. You just have to get consistent at jumping the height you can clear, and once you do that then you can work on getting higher. I don't really know how, but if I could figure that out, maybe I would go higher."

At this point in her career, Bullock is consistent at the 5-10 mark. In her first two outdoor meets of the season — the Texas Relays on April 6 and the Nebraska Wesleyan Invitational three days later — she hit the mark, taking first place in the latter.

Her main accomplishment thus far, however, is her indoor performance at the NCAA meet at Fayetteville, Ark., in early March. The only freshman in the competition, Bullock said she was quite nervous about the competition but somehow "gutted it out."

She jumped 6-0 and placed ninth place, earning All-America honors by placing among the top eight American-born athletes.

"The night before I remember thinking, 'I don't think I'm going to make it,' because every person there had jumped over 6 feet and I was the only freshman," Bullock said. "I was scared."

With her "loud and friendly" personality, however, it seems Bullock has transitioned easily into her new surroundings. The high jump has brought her back to her family's old stomping ground. Her father, Ivan Bullock, was a hurdler at Nebraska Wesleyan.

And with her grandparents and aunt and uncle just a few minutes away, Bullock said homesickness has not been an issue.

Pepin said, overall, Bullock has been a "joy to coach." Not only is she producing at the top level, she also is easy to work with, he said.

"She does everything that you ask her to do," Pepin said. "She's a good communicator. She gives good feedback. She's on time, and she wants to be better. She can be competitive in practice when she needs to be."

It's true that Bullock enjoys high jumping. After all, "who wouldn't want to jump into mats all day?" she said.

She tried it for the first time one afternoon when she was in middle school and after beating the boys was asked to come back and keep trying. While she played basketball and volleyball and ran cross country in high school, she slowly began giving up the other sports to focus on her high jump career. She ended her high school stint tied for seventh on Texas' all-time high school record chart with her 6-0 mark.

"People think it's so easy, and then when they try to do it they realize how hard it really is," Bullock said. "It just makes you feel good that you can be good at something like that. I don't know, though, I don't know why I like it. It's hard to describe — it's just one of those things."

But even though she loves the high jump, Bullock isn't necessarily the type to continue working on small technical parts of the event if the day isn't going well.

She's not a perfectionist, she said.

"I'm always frustrated, but I'm not the type of person who will stay for three hours trying to figure that one thing out," Bullock said. "If I'm having a bad day, I just forget about it and start over the next day."

Pepin would disagree with his star freshman a little bit.

While he said she needs to continue building her strength and working on plyometric drills, he complimented her on her speed and her meticulous technical ability.

"You don't have to push her much at all," Pepin said. "She's so highly motivated, if anything you have to

hold her back. She wants to practice morning, noon and night."

Maybe Bullock is trying to prove people wrong.

When she entered college, some told her not to expect too much out of herself. Jumping 6-0 in high school was one thing but doing it at the collegiate level is quite another they told her.

However, Bullock has already proven them wrong.

Not only did they make her expect more out of herself during the indoor season, but also she is aiming to prove herself again during outdoor competition.

"I expect that if I can do it indoor, I better do it outdoors," Bullock said. "I'd never done it indoor until this year; it was the first time ever. Now I'm spoiled. It's not cold, it's not windy — you don't have to worry about anything. So outdoors, I would say is harder just because of the weather."

"But I think I will PR (get a personal record). It just feels like the indoor season was a warm-up to the outdoor season." ■

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SPOTLIGHT

'Like a Dream'

Everything came together in Husker sophomore's title run

By Terry Douglass

If the story of Paul Donahoe's run to the 125-pound title in the NCAA Championships would've been submitted as a movie script, the Hollywood suits probably would've passed.

The dramatic ending was a little too much, no one would've believed it — not even the test audience for a straight-to-home-video "B" movie. It was that good.

"It really was like a dream," said Donahoe, who became the Cornhuskers' ninth national champion wrestler with a 3-1 overtime victory against Oklahoma senior Sam Hazewinkel on March 17. "My high school coaches and family were all there to see it."

"It was almost too perfect."

How perfect?

First, consider that Donahoe won the NCAA title in Auburn Hills, Mich., which is located just 30 miles from his hometown of Davison, Mich. Then, take note that the Nebraska sophomore had scored just three points while going 0-3 against the previously unbeaten Hazewinkel in his career, including a 12-3 loss to the four-time All-American in the Big 12 Conference tournament just two weeks before.

On the way to winning the title before a crowd of nearly 18,000 fans and an ESPN television audience in The Palace, the sixth-seeded Donahoe defeated the Nos. 3-, 2- and 1-ranked wrestlers.

"Deep inside, I knew that I could beat everyone that I

PAUL DONAHOE

SOPHOMORE WRESTLER

was going up against," Donahoe said. "Once I got into the finals, I just decided that I wanted it."

Donahoe capped a 35-5 season that saw him earn All-America honors by scoring a two-point takedown on a single-leg shot with 39 seconds remaining in overtime against Hazewinkel.

"Paul beat one of the best wrestlers in college wrestling in Sam Hazewinkel," Nebraska coach Mark Manning said. "Hazewinkel was a four-time All-American and a three-time Big 12 champ and went on to win the U.S. Open Greco-Roman championship a few weeks later, so Paul beat a very quality opponent on the grandest stage."

Going into the finals, Donahoe said he took comfort in the notion that there was no way he could wrestle worse than he did the previous time he faced Hazewinkel. Donahoe gave up an early scoring flurry to the Sooner standout in the Big 12 tournament and never recovered.

"This time, I figured that maybe he was going to tighten up as the match went on," Donahoe said. "As long as I kept the score close, I figured I'd have a good chance in the end."

"All the pressure was on him."

Manning said everything just came together in the NCAA tournament for Donahoe.

"You have to be on, you have to have luck, you have to work hard, you have to be mentally prepared, and Paul did all those things that weekend," Manning said. "I could tell at the NCAA Tournament that he was wrestling within him-



self and he was really calm mentally.

"Paul's a competitor. He was an underdog in many people's eyes, but he went out to prove that he's the best and that he worked hard to be there."

While Donahoe might look like he's about 15 years old, Manning said you won't find a fiercer competitor on the team. Donahoe is also a freak about conditioning — a trait that especially paid off in a 2-1 double-OT victory over Cornell's Troy Nickerson in the NCAA Tournament semifinals.

"Paul's hard to wrestle because he's not going to stop," Manning said. "He's going to keep coming at you. If he gets taken down or something doesn't go right, he's going to come back at you even harder and that's a big asset Paul has."

"That's just how he competes."

The extent of Donahoe's drive was evident barely more than 48 hours after he captured his national title as he could be found working out in Nebraska's wrestling room. If that sounds a little excessive, Donahoe has a good explanation.

"First of all, I couldn't have slept the first couple of days after the national tournament — even I wanted to," Donahoe said. "I just figured that if maybe I got a workout in, I'd be able to relax a little bit."

However, Donahoe doesn't plan to rest for long. His quest now is to become Nebraska's first-ever multiple national champion.

"That is the goal," Donahoe said. "Now that I've won it, my goal is to win it twice more. People might think that I just wrestled a great tournament, but I had a good season, too. I want to show everyone that this wasn't some kind of a fluke."

"If I don't ever win it again, I won't be complete."

Donahoe, who was the first Husker wrestler to claim a national title since Jason Powell won at 125 in 2004, is Manning's second national champion at Nebraska. Donahoe was also the second NU sophomore to win it all, joining the program's all-time victories leader Tolly Thompson, who won the heavyweight title as a sophomore in 1995.

"When we recruited Paul and we signed him, I knew that he had the ability to be a multiple national champion," Manning said. "I have thrown that challenge out there, and I think there are a number of guys in wrestling room that can do that."

Nebraska returns five of its six national qualifiers for next season after finishing 16th in the national tournament with 34.5 points. Donahoe and Chris Oliver have two years of eligibility remaining, while Craig Brester, Stephen Dwyer and Jordan Burroughs have three.

Manning said it was interesting to see Donahoe's teammates greet him in the warm-up area after he had just won his national title.

"You could just tell in their faces that there was just tremendous belief that since Paul did it, they could do it, too," Manning said. "That's what you need to have to have great teams and win championships. Hopefully, this is just the start of something great."

Donahoe thinks it will be.

"I shocked the world this year, but I think our team is going to shock the world next year," Donahoe said. "Everyone here really wants it." ■

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the *Grand Island (Neb.) Independent*. He can be reached at terry.douglass@msn.com



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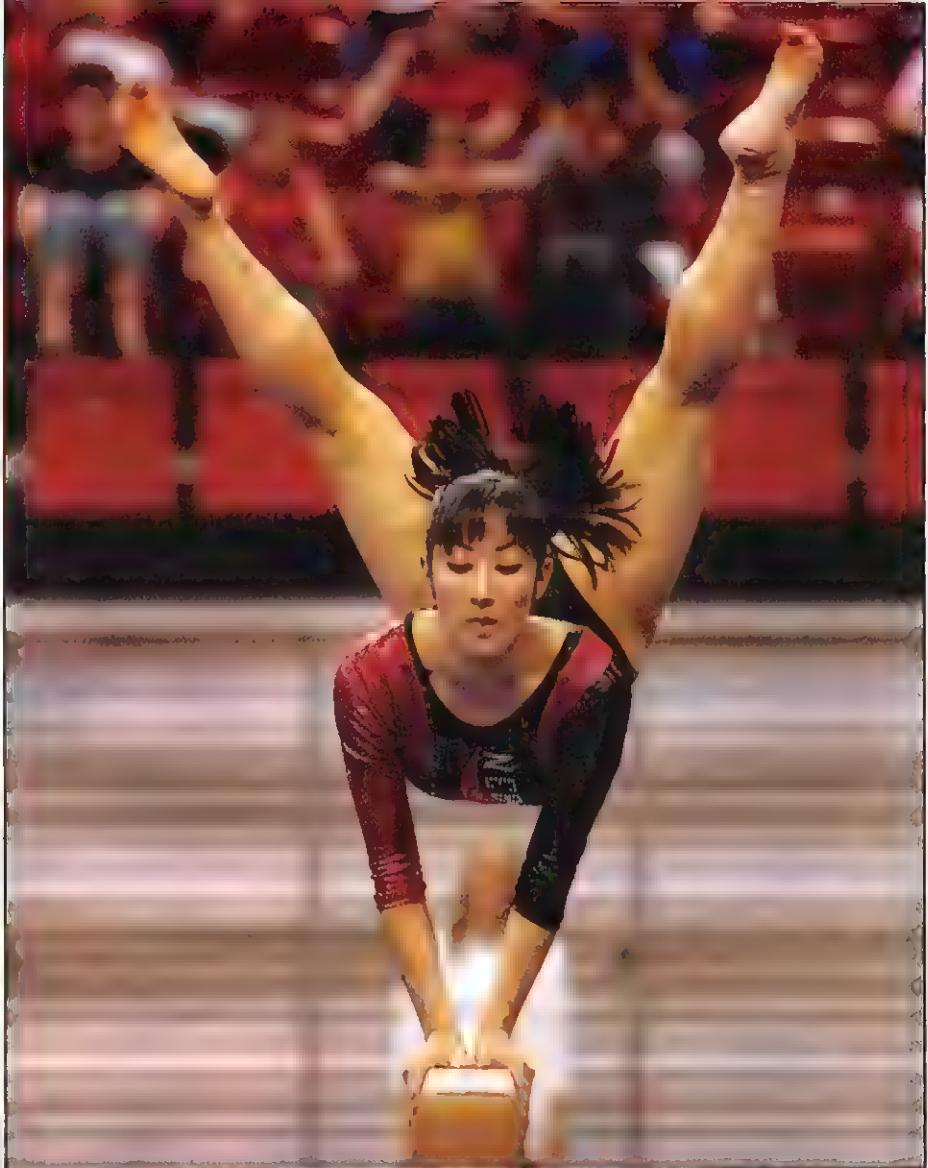


True freshman Lindsey Licht (above) and senior Sarah Pavan each contributed 12 kills to help the Nebraska volleyball team to a 30-19, 30-17, 30-28 sweep over Colorado State in their final spring scrimmage April 14 in front of 2,893 fans at the NU Coliseum. Pavan (9) and junior Amanda Gates (17) prepare for the block (left) as the defending national champions finished 3-0 in spring exhibitions. They will open the season in the AVCA Showcase Aug. 24-25 at Qwest Center Omaha, where NU won its third national title in December (More on Page 7).



GYMNASICS

Sophomore Tricia Woo (right) shows her form in the vault during a dual-meet victory over Kentucky March 23 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The Nebraska women won the Big 12 Championships March 31 in Columbia, Mo., and placed second in the NCAA West Regional two weeks later in Berkeley, Calif., to qualify for the NCAA Championships in Salt Lake City, Utah, April 26-28.



Junior Stephen Tétrault (left) earned All-America honors by placing sixth on the pommel horse and seventh in the all-around at the 2007 NCAA Championships in State Park, Pa., April 13-14. Sophomore T.J. Schmidt also earned All-America honors by finishing fifth on the pommel horse.



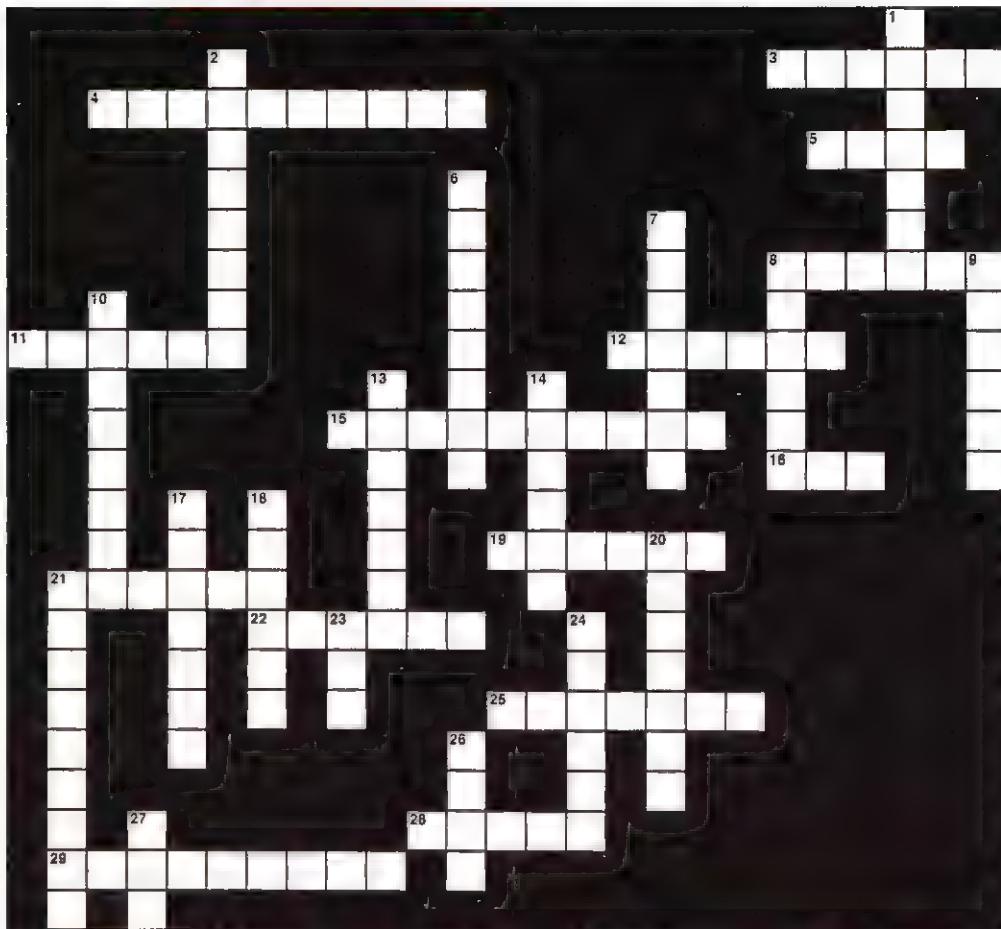
CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 3 Wears No. 16
- 4 2007 nonconference road opponent
- 5 Freshman quarterback
- 8 Cornerback injured during spring
- 11 Wears No. 13
- 12 Quarterbacks coach
- 15 Sam Keller's home state
- 16 Defensive tackle from Oregon
- 19 Kicked field goal in Spring Game
- 21 1997 Outland Trophy winner
- 22 Defensive end from Tennessee
- 25 1992 Outland Trophy winner
- 28 Leading rusher in Spring Game
- 29 Leading tackler in Spring Game

DOWN

- 1 1997 Lombardi Award winner
 - 2 Leading receiver in Spring Game
 - 6 Joe Ganz's home state
 - 7 Kicker recruit
 - 8 Wears No. 1
 - 9 Opponent in 2007 opener
 - 10 2006 Big 12 champion
 - 13 2006 leading rusher
 - 14 Wears No. 98
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 - 24 Wears No. 2
 - 26 Wide receiver recruit from Omaha
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- Answers in June-July issue



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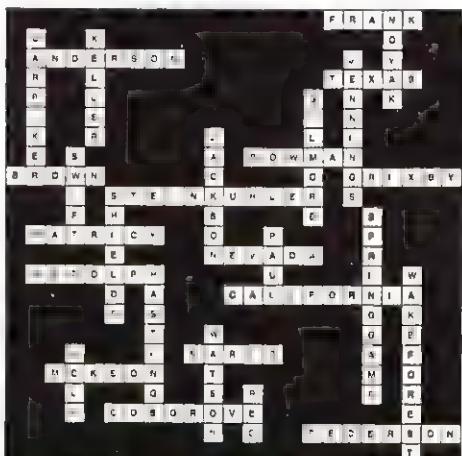
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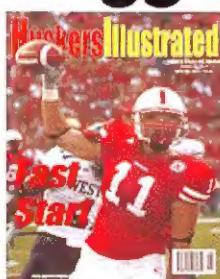
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Nothing New

Junior quarterback Ganz says he's learned to take the backseat to all the publicity



**Mike
BABCOCK**

IF SAM KELLER HAD QUESTIONS, he could go to his competition for answers. Joe Ganz was willing to help. "I've been telling him false stuff," Ganz said after the first practice of the spring.

Ganz was kidding. "That's not my nature," he said. "I'm not going to be a guy that's going to be a total jerk to somebody just because he's coming in trying to play."

"I was in his shoes once. I didn't know the offense. I didn't know anything."

Teammates helped him. So he was just passing on the favor.

Spend a few minutes talking to Ganz and you'll come away hoping he wins the job as the Nebraska football team's starting quarterback. Seeing the underdog succeed would be nice.

Sure he's motivated by fan fascination with Keller, the new guy. "It motivates you to a point, but it can't be the thing that drives you," he said. "It's still got to come from within. It's got to be an inner drive that you want the job, (not that) you just don't want somebody else to have it."

"It motivated me, but I'm kind of used to it already with the whole Harrison (Beck) thing. I've learned to take the backseat to all the publicity. So it's nothing new to me."

Spend a few minutes with Keller and, well, you'll come away hoping he wins the job. By all indications, he's a stand-up guy. After a campus parking-space incident involving poor judgment, he made a public apology, waiting patiently for a television reporter to adjust a camera lens.

He had to have been more uncomfortable than if he had been under pressure in the pocket. He's engaging, charismatic, approachable, a good interview. Reporters favor such players.

In fact, spend a few minutes with Beau Davis or Patrick Witt or Zac Lee, who couldn't practice in the spring, and you'll come away wishing each of them could be the starter.

That's not going to happen, of course. Barring injury, Keller or Ganz will be the starting quarterback when Nebraska opens the 2007 season against Nevada at Memorial Stadium on Sept. 1.

Coach Bill Callahan said he won't announce which one until the week before the game. But we'll look for signs, such as Keller's being first on the field in the Spring Game.

That's not much but it's about all we've got. The numbers were about the same.

Reporters don't influence coaching decisions. If they

did, the matter of a starting quarterback would have been resolved before the first snap of the spring, probably long before that in fact.

At the pre-spring news conference, just about every player who showed up to be interviewed, whether on offense or defense, was asked about Keller, the transfer from Arizona State.

When players ran agility drills in winter conditioning, he ran them like everyone else, tight end J.B. Phillips said. "I mean, I can't give you a whole lot. We do something, he does it, too. That's about all I can really say. I would love to give you something, just phenomenal, breath-taking."

"I don't know. He puts the pants on one leg at a time, too, I guess."

Phillips said he knew more about redshirted freshman defensive end Pierre Allen.

Throughout the spring, such questions elicited non-committal answers, although middle linebacker Corey McKeon provided his own unique insight into the quarterback competition.

Ganz has "a lot of athletic ability and he can make plays on his own," said McKeon. "And he knows the offense very well. Joe, he's a product of the system. He goes through his progressions."

Keller has "experience where he's looking for Maurice Purify every play. You look over and see (5-foot-9) Courtney Grixby guarding (6-4) Maurice Purify, he knows where to put the ball to get a big play. He knows how to attack people. He knows that if he's going to run a three-step, quick slant, to look for Terrence Nunn or Nate Swift, guys that can beat people with speed," McKeon said.

"He knows how to use his weapons. That's something Joe has not been able to do yet because he's not been on the field as much." Keller started eight games at Arizona State, including seven as a junior before a thumb injury. He also was the starter and MVP of the 2004 Sun Bowl game.

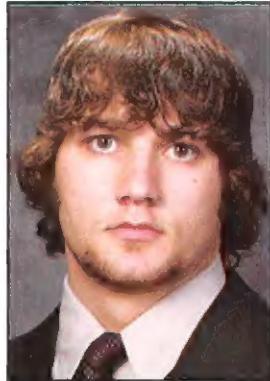
Even so, McKeon wouldn't be drawn into picking one over the other.

"It's hard to choose," he said, "because you've got a guy that knows how to take advantage of a defense but (also) a guy that knows how to read a defense."

After the Spring Game, defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh was asked his opinion of Keller's play. The question implied, not so subtly, that Keller had performed better than Ganz.

"Sam is a great quarterback," Suh replied. But, he added unsolicited, so is Ganz.

"To me it's up in the air who's going to start next year." ■



Joe Ganz played in five games as Zac Taylor's top backup last season.

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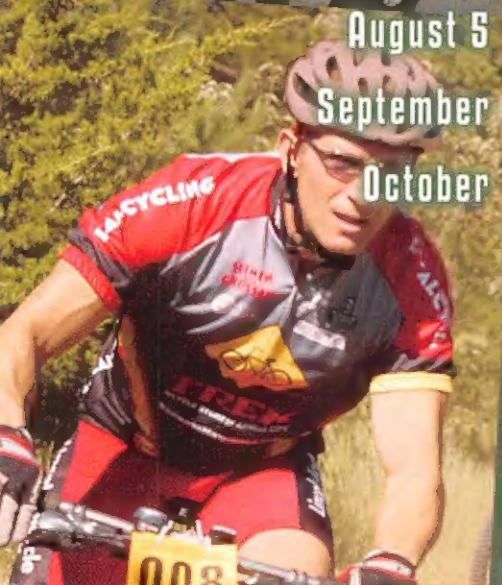
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